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ANUARY 1 & 8, 2001

THE MYTH OF COLIN POWELL

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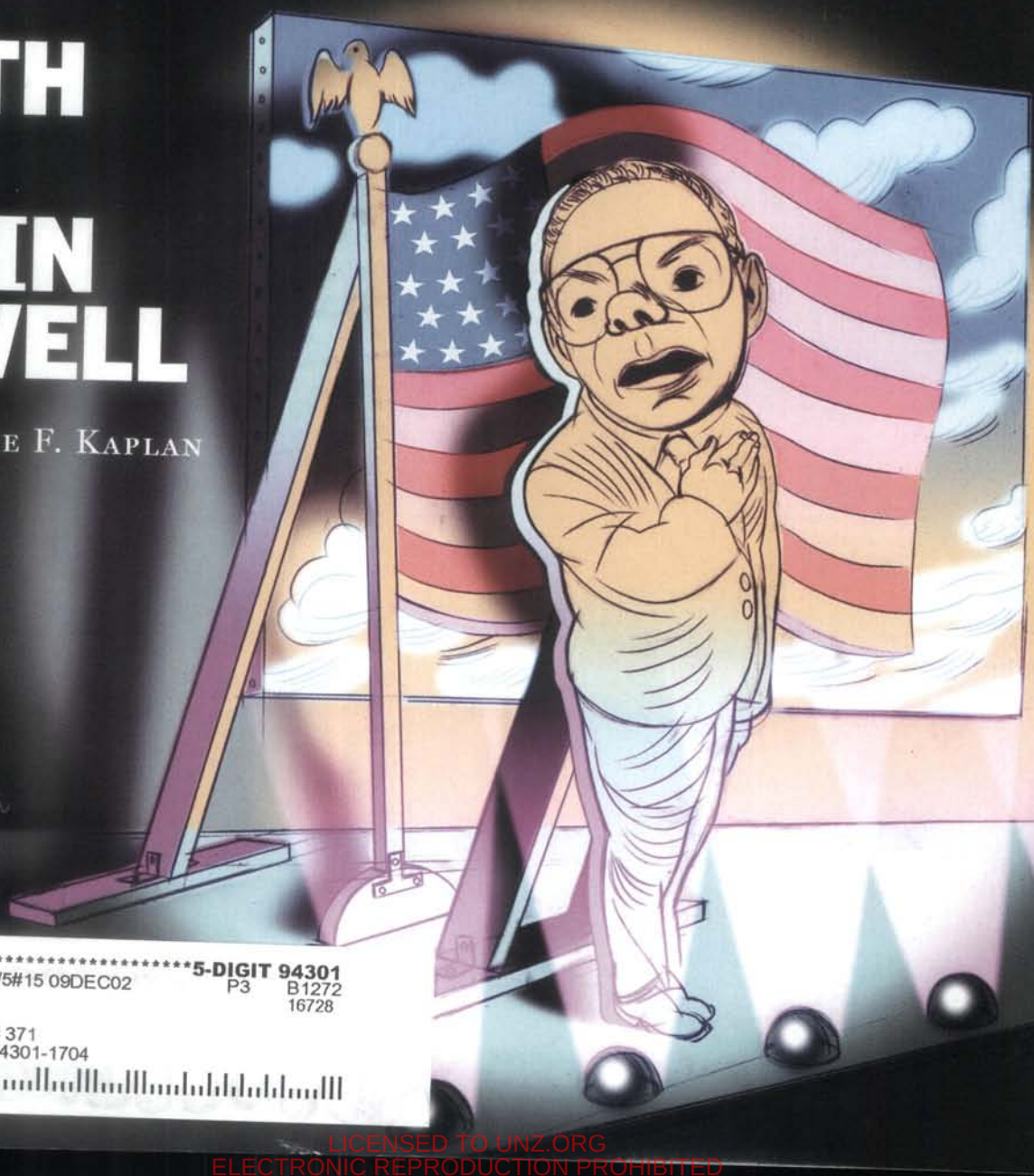

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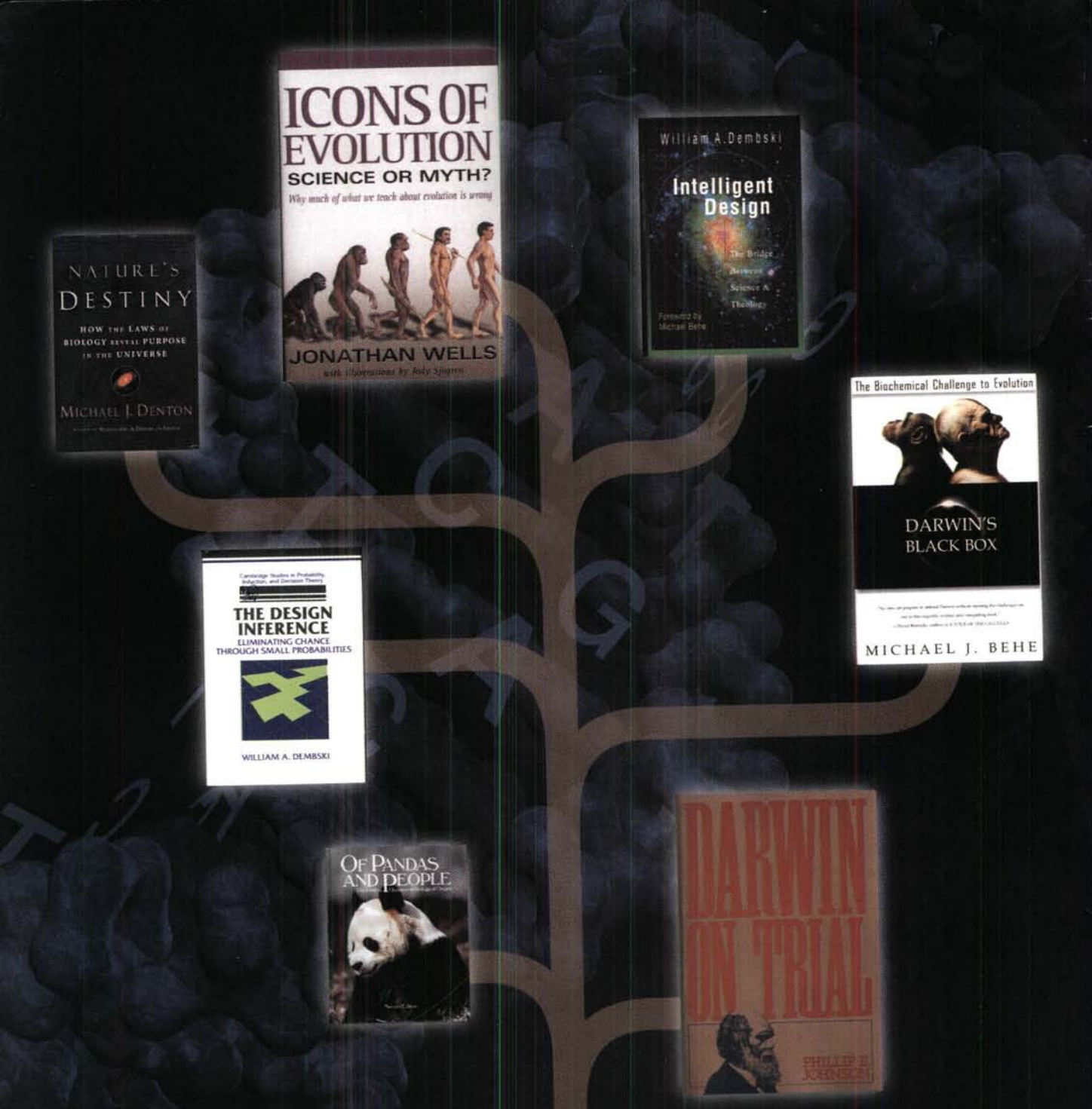

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Caveat

TO THE EDITORS:

To say that Al Gore's proposal to recount all of Florida's 67 counties by hand is "clearly more generous, less arbitrary, and more fair than the one espoused by George W. Bush" is just nonsense ("Hand Over Fist," November 27). The unfortunate fact is that the deadline for requesting recounts had already passed by that point. Gore added the suggestion as a caveat that appeared reasonable and fair, as it would be if implemented correctly. He knew, however, that it would never happen. Instead of praising his speech, add it to the growing number of examples of shameless demagoguery, something both the Republicans and Democrats have perfected.

SERAPHIM F. DANCKAERT
Hillsdale, Michigan

Fraternal twins

TO THE EDITORS:

John B. Judis writes that in the election of 1876, unlike the recent one, the differences between the parties really mattered and were settled by the famous Wormley Hotel bargain to let Rutherford B. Hayes have the presidency in return for the end of Reconstruction ("Making Hayes," November 27).

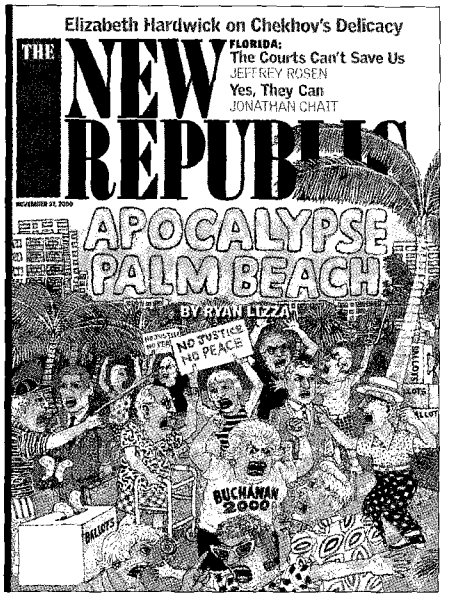
As the late C. Vann Woodward long ago pointed out in his book *Reunion and Reaction*, Hayes would have had no choice but to withdraw the remaining troops from the South, even if he had gotten a clear electoral majority. To the extent that there was a "bargain" in 1876–1877, the most important thing Hayes offered was not withdrawal of the troops (everyone knew this was coming anyway, and "home rule" had already been restored to all but two of the Southern states) but support for certain public works desired by the great business interests of the South. The real differences between the parties in 1876 and for two decades thereafter were less, not greater, than those dividing them today.

DAVID S. TENNER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITORS:

John B. Judis's insightful comparison of the elections of 1876 and 2000 overlooked one other similarity. Both Rutherford B. Hayes and George W. Bush are members of the same elite American political institution: the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. Hayes was a Deke at Kenyon, and Bush was a Deke at Yale. History, it appears, is on Bush's side.

MICHAEL HACKER
Washington, D.C.



Conscience of a conservative

TO THE EDITORS:

Thanks for putting out the best guide to surviving the current presidential election with our faith in democracy intact. But even better guidance can be found in THE NEW REPUBLIC's back pages, in Richard Wolin's masterfully succinct summary of Hannah Arendt's life and writings, possibly the most "timely" piece of commentary you've published on our present worries about liberal society ("The Illiberal Imagination," November 27). As one who thrilled to Arendt's writings in the 1960s—incompletely and imperfectly understood, I now see—I needed Wolin's perspective to make me realize why the nagging doubts I never could articulate were indeed legitimate. His article gives us a critically useful understanding of how our society's ideal is always under attack from both totalitarian tyranny and the mandarin tyranny of rejecting all that it classifies as "bourgeois." Too often we liberals echo Arendt's arrogance, and it's possible that the rest of the electorate's rejection of Al "smartest boy in the class" Gore can be traced to such cultural conflict.

J. SCOTT DRENDALL
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITORS:

Richard Wolin's "The Illiberal Imagination" is the third review published in TNR in recent years dedicated to the proposition that Hannah Arendt was a foolish political theorist. I do not understand why so much intellectual energy is necessary to deal with someone of such purported irrelevance. And while Wolin is no doubt a bright historian, his review is littered with specious claims about Arendt. Space does not permit a detailed rebuttal (a full reply is posted at *www.indiana.edu/~iupolsci/isaaconarendt.html*). But some corrections are appropriate here.

1. Arendt views the rise of the social as signifying not the fateful triumph of the private over the public (as Wolin would have it) but rather the effacement of the very distinction between the private and the public, to the detriment of both.

2. While Arendt's tortured comments about Heidegger's Nazism deserve criticism, it is untrue that she failed to ask why so many intellectuals succumbed to the lure of totalitarianism. This was a major theme of her writing.

3. While Arendt was critical of bourgeois society (as were Joseph Schumpeter, Raymond Aron, and others), she was also highly critical of the anti-liberal fanaticism of right- and left-wing intellectuals of the interwar period.

4. While Arendt rejected spurious explanations of Nazism in terms of German national character, in no way does she deny that Nazism itself was a phenomenon peculiar to German history.

5. Wolin's charge that Arendt's writings gave short shrift to liberals is bizarre, for it is well-known that Montesquieu and, especially, Tocqueville and Kant were major influences on her work.

6. Arendt never claimed that Nazi crimes were in certain respects unexceptional or banal. She insisted that these crimes were unprecedented and evil. She did claim that some Nazi criminals—Eichmann, for example, but not Julius Streicher—were unexceptional and banal. The distinction between the crime and the criminal, which Wolin seems to have missed, is an essential feature of her argument.

7. While Arendt criticized Enlightenment philosophies of natural rights, she never vindicated Burke's traditionalism, as Wolin claims. Anyone who has read the chapter of *Origins* titled "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" knows that Arendt criticizes the ineffectuality of the discourse of human rights in an age of refugees, statelessness, and forcible displacement of peoples. She calls for a rethinking of human rights to advance the cause of universal human dignity. In her preface to *Origins* she writes: "Antisemitism ... imperialism ... totalitarianism ... have demonstrated that human dignity needs a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle."

8. Arendt rejects the idea of a natural

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elite or aristocracy and theorizes the extraordinary capacities of ordinary citizens, which is why she extols worker councils—hardly aristocratic organs. Wolin writes that because Arendtian action is at odds with the way most modern individuals live their lives, Arendt's thought is not very "serviceable ... for the purposes of contemporary democratic practice." If by "serviceable" Wolin means uplifting or heartening, then he is right, though it is a curious notion of intellectual responsibility that would judge the relevance of an idea by its convenience. But there is much about Wolin's review that can only be described as curious.

JEFFREY C. ISAAC
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RICHARD WOLIN REPLIES:
Five years ago, Jeffrey C. Isaac and I engaged in a spirited public debate about Hannah Arendt's political legacy. I came away with the conviction that Isaac failed to appreciate how deeply Arendt's political outlook remained rooted in the German mandarin-conservative intellectual milieu in which she was trained. His letter strongly reinforces that earlier impression.

A systematic reconstruction of Arendt's political thought shows how profoundly—and erroneously—she perceived totalitarianism as an outgrowth of "bourgeois society." Her astonishing characterization of Hitler's SS as composed of "bourgeois" who were "good family men" (in "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility") well-illustrates this point. There is a strong line of continuity between this claim and her exaggerated "functionalist" account of Nazism in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, where, in an appalling misnomer, she insinuates that the great mass of Nazi perpetrators were, like Eichmann, "banal."

As far as Isaac's charitable reading of the "liberal" virtues of Arendt's political thought is concerned, it is simply not supported by her own positions and doctrines. The hollowness of Isaac's claims about the influence of Montesquieu and Tocqueville is suggested by the fact that in the text of *The Human Condition* each is mentioned only once. In the same work Arendt cursorily dismisses Kant's political thought by declaring that in his work "the anthropocentric utilitarianism of homo faber has found its greatest expression" (a classic Heideggerian critique, by the way). And, regarding Arendt's attitude toward Burke, Isaac might be surprised to find the following unambiguous vindication in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: "These facts and reflections [concerning the twentieth-century eclipse of the Rights of Man] offer what seems an ironical, bitter, and belated confirmation of the famous arguments with which Edmund Burke opposed the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man." I defy Isaac to construct a left-liberal interpretation of these remarks.

Making faces

TO THE EDITORS:
Not only were the pictures comparing the looks of Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris and heavy-metal singer Ozzy Osbourne in terrible taste, they weren't even funny (Notebook, November 27). Stick to criticizing programs and actions and lay off the other stuff, which demeans your magazine.

THOMAS MALOY
Muskegon, Michigan

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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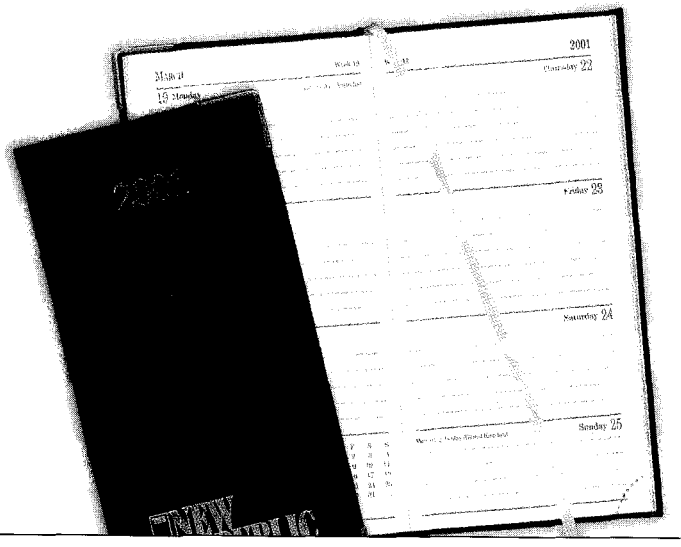

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Color Scheme

DURING THE FALL campaign, few statements were as likely to send Democrats up the wall as the suggestion that George W. Bush might have more senior minority Cabinet members than Al Gore. But guess what? Here we are in the initial stages of the Bush presidency-elect, and it's diversity time! Bush's first four major appointments included not a single white man. And unlike his father, who absurdly argued that race didn't factor into his selection of Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court, W. acknowledged his motivation up front. When asked if the ethnic background or gender of his appointees was meant to send a message, Bush replied, "You bet: that people who work hard and make the right decisions in life can achieve anything they want in America."

In that sentence, you can see the hope and the limits of what might be termed "multicultural conservatism." Notice what Bush didn't say. He didn't say, as Bill Clinton did, that his Cabinet would "look like America." He was not doling out jobs to meet quotas set by ethnic- or gender-interest groups. He was affirming critical conservative nostrums—equality of opportunity and personal responsibility—and saying that ethnicity and gender should be no bar to advancement. It may be that his Cabinet doesn't end up looking like America. So be it. But it may prove a surprising affirmation of inclusion and equality nonetheless.

Tokens? Affirmative action in disguise? You can hear the derision now. But none of Bush's appointments fits either bill. A token appointment is meant purely as window dressing. A diversity appointment is meant to appease an interest group in a governing coalition. But Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and Al Gonzalez have personal and professional histories with W.; all are perfectly qualified; and none appeases powerful interests in the Republican Party. Indeed, Powell's and Rice's moderate stances on domestic issues like abortion actually offend important Republican constituencies.

But can they and others actually change the Republican Party? We'll see. Appointments, while welcome, aren't enough. Minority voters aren't stupid. They want to see the GOP change more than its image. If all Bush is doing is putting a brown, black, or female face on policies that negatively target gays, immigrants, and blacks, he'll deserve all the contempt he'll receive. But, equally, he should resist the pandering temptation, the fallacy that there is no difference between what professional minority leaders want and what minority voters believe. It's a difficult balance, especially at a time of delicate race relations. But it's vitally important. Since the Democrats have largely abandoned the pretense of color-blindness and have all but capitulated to the politics of balkanization—in affirmative action, hate-crime laws, and racially loaded electoral tactics—the Republicans have become the upholders of the integrationist cause by default.

With blacks, Bush has a mountain to climb. Goaded by an unimaginative leadership that cries Selma at the drop of a hat, African American voters are about as racially resentful as at any time in the recent past. Polls show far higher black support for Jesse Jackson than for Powell. Despite a clear shift in tone by Republican leaders, blacks voted even more emphatically Democratic this year than in years past. But the last thing Bush should do in response is cave and endorse the soft bigotry of affirmative action. He's taken the right first step with his appointments. The next important areas are criminal justice and education. Why not tell his new attorney general to aggressively investigate alleged voting-rights infractions in Florida? Why not, for good measure, make a federal investigation into racial profiling another top priority? If Bush could link an end to racial profiling in the police force with an end to the racial profiling of affirmative action, he'd have a lot more credibility across the color line. For a kicker, he should take on the civil rights establishment and push school vouchers for deprived inner-city kids in failing schools. I doubt all this would move the black vote dramatically in his direction, but even a few points would help—not just electorally but also culturally.

More fertile ground exists elsewhere. Bush's best bet is with Latinos, Asians, and homosexuals. All these groups, unlike blacks and Jews, contain large segments that lean Republican. Each group comprises a fledgling array of thinkers and writers prepared to buck the groupthink of the left. (For an excellent overview of this new movement, check out Angela Dillard's forthcoming book, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now: Multicultural Conservatism in America.*) With each of these groups, Bush has to go over the heads of a political leadership largely in cahoots with the Democratic Party's spoils system and appeal directly to voters. There's a bridgehead already. One-quarter of gay and lesbian voters went for Bush, despite his opposition to many of their basic civil rights. A full third of Hispanic voters and almost half of Asian American voters also went Republican. The way to reach these voters is not to pander to their alleged leaders, caving in on affirmative action, bilingual education, and the like. It is to affirm core principles—equality under the law, family, faith, economic freedom—and show how minorities can prosper under them.

Here are some pointers. I have no illusions that Bush will end the poisonous policy of "don't ask, don't tell," and the likely appointment of Dan Coats as defense secretary is not encouraging. But Bush could direct the Pentagon (with Vice President-elect Cheney's backing) to reduce the number of gay discharges, and if they sank below Clinton-Gore levels, people would notice. He should also appoint an openly gay official to a real position and retain Clinton's anti-discrimination policy in federal employment. Equally, a rhetorical shift away from the GOP's recent anti-immigrant policies, a reform of the noxious Immigration Act of 1996, and a free-trade initiative with South America could do more for Latino Republicans than any foolish pandering on bilingual education. As for Asian Americans, opposition to race preferences—which are often, practically speaking, quotas against Asians in higher education—will stand Bush in good stead.

This is not an argument for guilt and charity, although both may be justified. At bottom, it's an argument for self-interest. If W. is a smart man, and I think he is, he will have looked at the election results. They show a slim Republican majority teetering on the edge of multicultural extinction. Truly polyglot states like California and New York now have Democratic majorities of landslide proportions. Others in the "blue zone" are following fast. In Florida, once a solid Republican state in presidential races, Gore forced W. to a draw by making inroads among Jews, blacks, gays, Latinos, and suburban baby-boomers. Bush must surely understand that this is where the Republican Party must gain if it is to survive, let alone prosper. He has a rare chance, then, not just to better his country but to rescue his party from impending oblivion. It's not just Republicans who should hope he succeeds.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Death and Taxes

THINK GEORGE W. BUSH'S election doesn't matter because he won't be able to get Rush Limbaugh confirmed to the Supreme Court? Think again. The presidential election of 2000 has already changed the boundaries of political debate, and not for the better. Take the debate over taxes. It now goes something like this:

The partisan, right-wing, take-no-prisoners position is that Bush should push his $1.3 trillion, across-the-board tax cut. The bipartisan, moderate, responsible position is that he should abandon it in favor of a repeal of the estate tax and the marriage penalty.

The good news is that tax cut number two will probably prevail. The bad news is that tax cut number two is still lousy. In the brave new world of GOP-controlled Washington, the "responsible" position on tax cuts is completely irresponsible. America doesn't need the repeal of the estate tax and the marriage penalty. In fact, it doesn't need any tax cuts at all.

Start with the estate tax, which conservatives mindlessly call the "death tax" even though 100 percent of Americans die and only 2 percent pay it. To make their case that it's un-American to tax income twice (once when somebody earns income and again when he passes that money on to his heirs), Republicans trot out farmers and small-business owners forced to sell family businesses to finance estate tax payments. But taxing inheritances has a long and proud history in America, in part because it captures income that the wealthy have hidden in tax shelters over the course of their lifetimes. (No less a capitalist icon than Andrew Carnegie, an estate tax proponent, once wrote, "The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced.") And the GOP's sob stories? It turns out they're exceedingly rare. The first $675,000 of an inheritance, or $1.3 million for a couple, is tax-free, which is why 98 percent of Americans pay no estate tax at all. Abolishing the tax altogether, as Republicans propose, would overwhelmingly favor the wealthiest Americans.

How about eradicating the marriage penalty? Who, after all, is against marriage? But getting rid of the marriage penalty isn't so easy. For one thing, not all married couples pay a penalty (that is, not all married couples pay higher rates than they would pay as single taxpayers). About half actually get a marriage *bonus*. The reason stems from the arithmetic of a progressive tax system. If you want to tax the affluent more than the nonaffluent, and if you want to treat taxpayers of equal means the same way, somebody has to pay a penalty—either married people or single people. The current system represents a rough balance, arrived at after the last round of marriage tax reform in 1969. (The reforms were passed because the old system penalized widows.) You can tinker with the balance so that single taxpayers pay more and married taxpayers pay less. But that just moves the penalty; it doesn't get rid of it. If you want to change that fact, you have to do more than change the tax code; you have to repeal the laws of mathematics.

Unless, of course, you're simply interested in emptying the Treasury—covering up the existing penalty with new giveaways and thus introducing a permanent liability into the government's revenue stream. This, more or less, is what the Republicans propose to do. And that highlights the other problem with getting rid of the marriage penalty and the estate tax: The money will be missed. Together, the two repeals would cost the federal government more than $50 billion per year—a sizable chunk of a budget surplus that may never materialize if the economy slows down and the baby-boomers keep soaking up more and more for their retirements.

If it insists on spending the money, Congress should spend it on programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit or Medicaid, which target help where it's most needed. (Marriage tax relief, like estate tax relief, is skewed toward the affluent: Those in the bottom 60 percent of the income distribution get just 11 percent of the total benefits.) Better still would be saving the money, using it to pay down the national debt, and then crediting it to Social Security. This would benefit all Americans in two ways. First, it would shore up our nation's most important social insurance program while keeping interest rates low. Second, it would protect against spending *cuts* (which, naturally, would hurt the poor more than the rich) in the likely event the surpluses disappear. Unfortunately, the candidate who proposed doing that isn't the one getting ready to move into the White House. His opponent is. And it looks as if he's already succeeded in moving the political landscape to the right, tainted victory and all. ■

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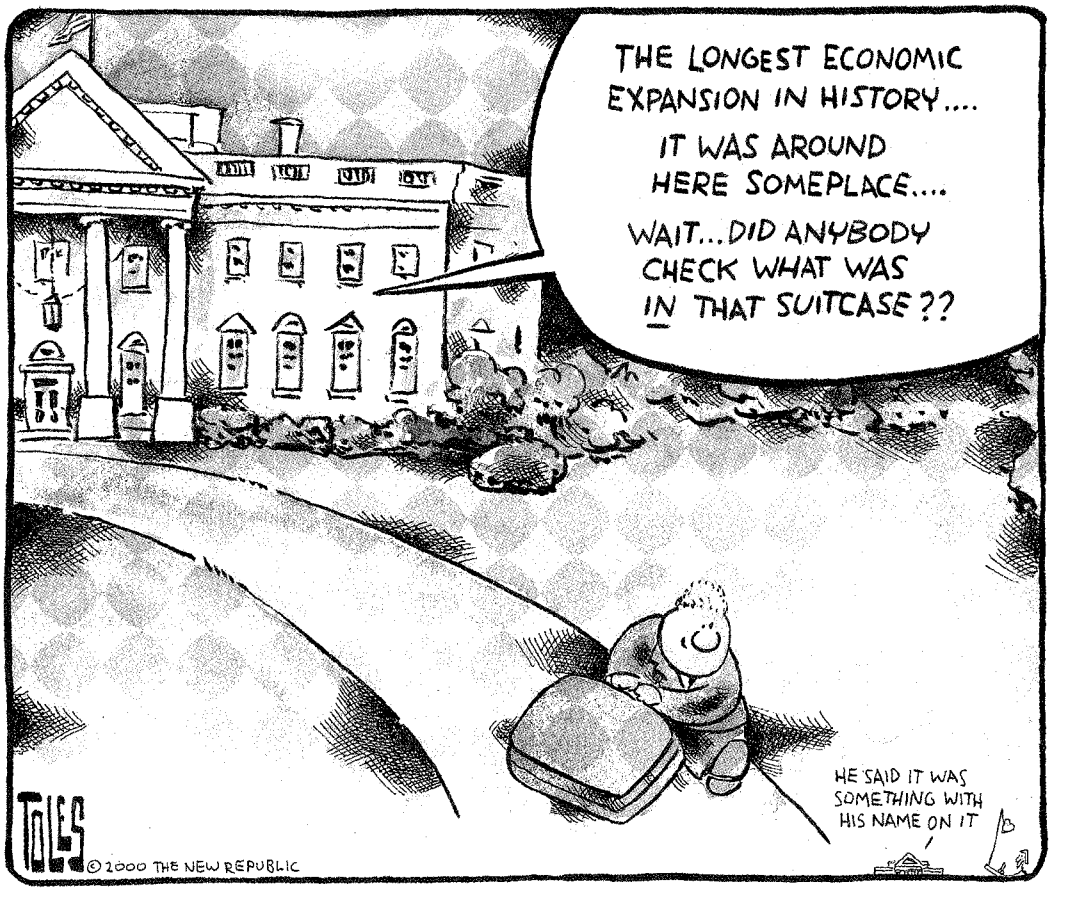
NOTEBOOK

RIGHT AND WRONG: Last week we learned what the five conservative justices of the U.S. Supreme Court would do when forced to choose between well-established conservative jurisprudence and their desire for a Republican president. This week we learned what the conservative punditocracy would do when faced with the same choice. And the result was—you guessed it—goodbye, state's rights and judicial restraint; hello, transition. The general conservative argument can be summed up thus: Who cares about judicial philosophy—this thing had to end! Had the Court not slammed the door on recounts, opined Charles Krauthammer, "Political tension would only have grown—this would not have been resolved until January!" "Were it not for the Court's willingness to take the case and the heat," predicted William Safire apocalyptically, "internecine mud wrestling would have gone on for at least another month." *National Review* crowed: "Supreme Court 1 Anarchy 0." Leave aside the fact that the "mud wrestling" would have gone on precisely because conservatives like Safire and *National Review* would have demanded that the Florida legislature appoint its own electors to match the slate Al Gore would likely have won through a full hand recount. More remarkable is the idea that letting Florida control its own recount, or even letting the battle go to Congress, constitutes "anarchy." Wasn't it only yesterday that right-wingers insisted that deference to the states and to the legislative branches constituted democracy at its most sublime? Now it's anarchy. If the political process can't handle a recount fight, after all, how could it possibly handle a really contentious issue, like abortion? In the midst of all this hideous spin, one specimen of conservative honesty stands out: John Diulio, writing in *The Weekly Standard*. "The arguments that ended the battle and 'gave' Bush the presidency are constitutionally disingenuous at best," he writes. "They will come back to haunt conservatives and confuse, if they do not cripple, the principled conservative case for limited government, legislative supremacy, and universal civic deference to legitimate, duly constituted state and local public authority." A brave and compelling statement—and a lonely one.

FUZZY MATH: As Al Gore's lead in the popular vote (now more than 500,000 votes) continues to grow, so does the absurdity of conservative efforts to argue it away. First there was the widespread argument that George W. Bush won more states than Gore (30 to 20), perhaps suggesting a conservative wish for the electoral college to be even less democratic than it already is. Next came the suggestion that Gore's votes were somehow less worthy than Bush's. In *The Wall Street Journal*, Pete DuPont argued that Gore was most successful in the "porn belt"—those regions with a high percentage of smut consumption. (That explains all that time Gore spent on the Stairmaster!) Meanwhile, *National Review*'s Larry Kudlow argued that Bush carried most of the country's fastest-growing new economy regions, a theory that is precisely backward, as John B. Judis has noted in these pages (see "For Richer and Poorer," December 4). But thus far the boldest attempt to posit a Republican majority is the county-by-county breakdown now touted on the website of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, where a chart shows Bush's advantage in counties won (2,436 to 676), square miles won (2,432,456 to 575,184), and "population"—a figure arrived at by adding the total population of each candidate's counties (regardless of how those people actually voted), in which Bush has an edge of 143 million to 127 million. So it turns out Bush *really* "won" by 16 million


THE LONGEST ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN HISTORY....
IT WAS AROUND HERE SOMEPLACE....
WAIT...DID ANYBODY CHECK WHAT WAS IN THAT SUITCASE??
HE SAID IT WAS SOMETHING WITH HIS NAME ON IT
TOLES
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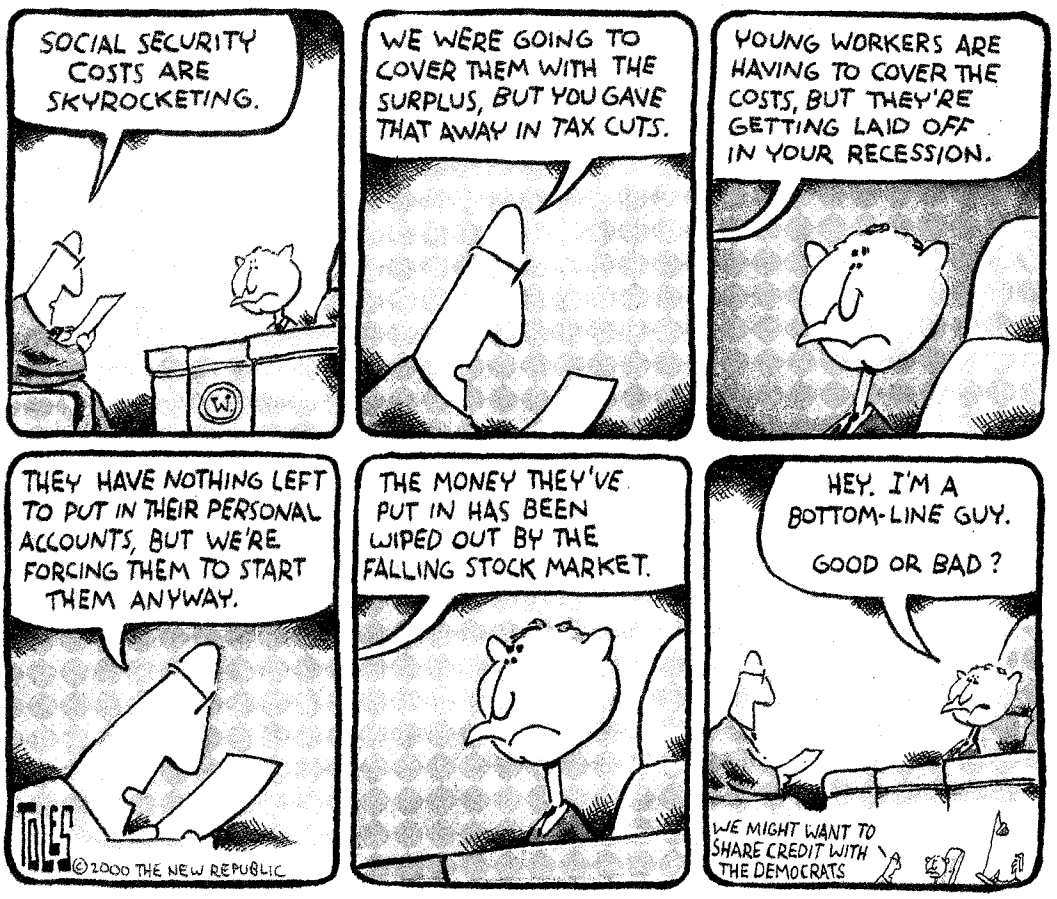
votes! And they say he doesn't have a mandate.

HIS AUSTRIA PROBLEM AND OURS: During his 22 years as pope, John Paul II has made several grand and masterful efforts to remedy his Church's sad history of anti-Semitism. So why does he keep messing it up? In 1987, the pope met with Austrian leader Kurt Waldheim, a man who spent decades trying to cover up his Nazi past. Last week, the Vatican gave a warm welcome to another Austrian whom almost every other European country has rightfully given the cold shoulder: retro-fascist Jörg Haider. On Saturday, Austria's best-looking Holocaust revisionist (sporting lederhosen, no less) led a 250-member delegation that brought an 80-foot Christmas tree from Carinthia, the southern Austrian province of which Haider is governor, to St. Peter's Square. During the visit, the macho pol shook John Paul's hand during a brief collective audience in the Apostolic Palace. Meanwhile, anti-Haider protests raged outside St. Peter's, and Jewish shopkeepers turned out their lights in protest as the Christmas tree was lit. (Haider's sympathetic response: "If they want to save electricity, let them.") The Vatican tried to downplay the meeting, arguing that Carinthia had been selected to present this year's Christmas tree in 1997, before Haider became governor, and that the visit was "pastoral," not political. But not for Haider, who used the free publicity from his visit to speak out against immigration. In an interview that appeared Sunday in the Rome-based *La Repubblica*, Haider said, "Everyone has a right to a dignified existence, but in their own country." Perhaps the pope might have suggested the same to him.

NEXT, HE'LL WANT AN ACRONYM FOR "JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY": "He has been the head of the Alcoa aluminum company, which, prior to his getting there, was called the Aluminum Company of America, and under his tenure the name was changed to Alcoa, simply the acronym, to get rid of the 'America.' I think that you might have some Republican senators asking him in confirmation what he didn't like about the word 'America' in the title of his company."—Terry Jeffrey, editor of *Human Events*, on Treasury Secretary-appointee Paul O'Neill, December 19

BEWARE TOM DELAY'S WEDGIES: "This is George W. Bush's first day of school. He goes to Capitol Hill High. You're an upperclassman giving him some advice. Who do you tell him to watch out for?"—Katie Couric to Tim Russert, "Today," December 15

THE NEW VICTIMS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT: "Today our wonderful country is suffocating in a cultural atmosphere of victimization and whining."—Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, George Mason University Law School commencement, May 22, 1999


SOCIAL SECURITY COSTS ARE SKYROCKETING.
WE WERE GOING TO COVER THEM WITH THE SURPLUS, BUT YOU GAVE THAT AWAY IN TAX CUTS.
YOUNG WORKERS ARE HAVING TO COVER THE COSTS, BUT THEY'RE GETTING LAID OFF IN YOUR RECESSION.
THEY HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO PUT IN THEIR PERSONAL ACCOUNTS, BUT WE'RE FORCING THEM TO START THEM ANYWAY.
THE MONEY THEY'VE PUT IN HAS BEEN WIPED OUT BY THE FALLING STOCK MARKET.
HEY. I'M A BOTTOM-LINE GUY. GOOD OR BAD?
WE MIGHT WANT TO SHARE CREDIT WITH THE DEMOCRATS
TOLES
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"When I was 16, I was sitting as the only black kid in my class, and I had grown up speaking a kind of a dialect.... [T]hey used to make fun of us back then.... So I learned that—I just started developing the habit of listening."—Thomas, explaining his silence in court, C-SPAN, December 13

DOMESTIC ADVISER: "I can tell you, from my point of view, I will not be going to Washington in the event he does."—Sue Ann Thompson, responding to rumors that her husband, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, may be appointed secretary of health and human services, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 20 ■

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George W.'s historical twin.

Man in the Mirror

By BENJAMIN SOSKIS

> "I will be guided by President Jefferson's sense of purpose: to stand for principle, to be reasonable in manner, and, above all, to do great good for the cause of freedom and harmony."
> —George W. Bush, December 13

IF YOU WATCHED George W. Bush's victory speech last Wednesday, you might have noticed a sprightly female figure with a trumpet and an hourglass flitting triumphantly among the governor's advisers. No, not Karen Hughes—it was Clio, the muse of history. Indeed, who else could have inspired our president-elect's elegant likening of himself to the sagacious Thomas J.? The nominal reason for the comparison, of course, was straightforward: Jefferson's first election, like Bush's, was marred by electoral controversy. By invoking Jefferson, Bush signaled his desire to heal a divided nation.

And yet he signaled so much more. For the manner of their elections is the beginning, not the end, of the two presidents' resemblances. Though the centuries conspire to separate them, still the two men gaze across time to recognize in each other a near-perfect likeness—one that far transcends their mutual acquaintance with Samuel Adams.

Recall, for instance, each man's upbringing, in which aristocratic privilege was tempered by hardy provincialism. Just as Jefferson emerged from the Blue Ridge frontier to acquire the social graces of Williamsburg, so, too, did Bush depart the rugged environs of West Texas for Andover and Yale, where he mastered—respectively—the pep-squad bullhorn and the Michelob funnel. Indeed, the two men shared a lifelong love of the classics: Jefferson studied Greek, Bush was one.

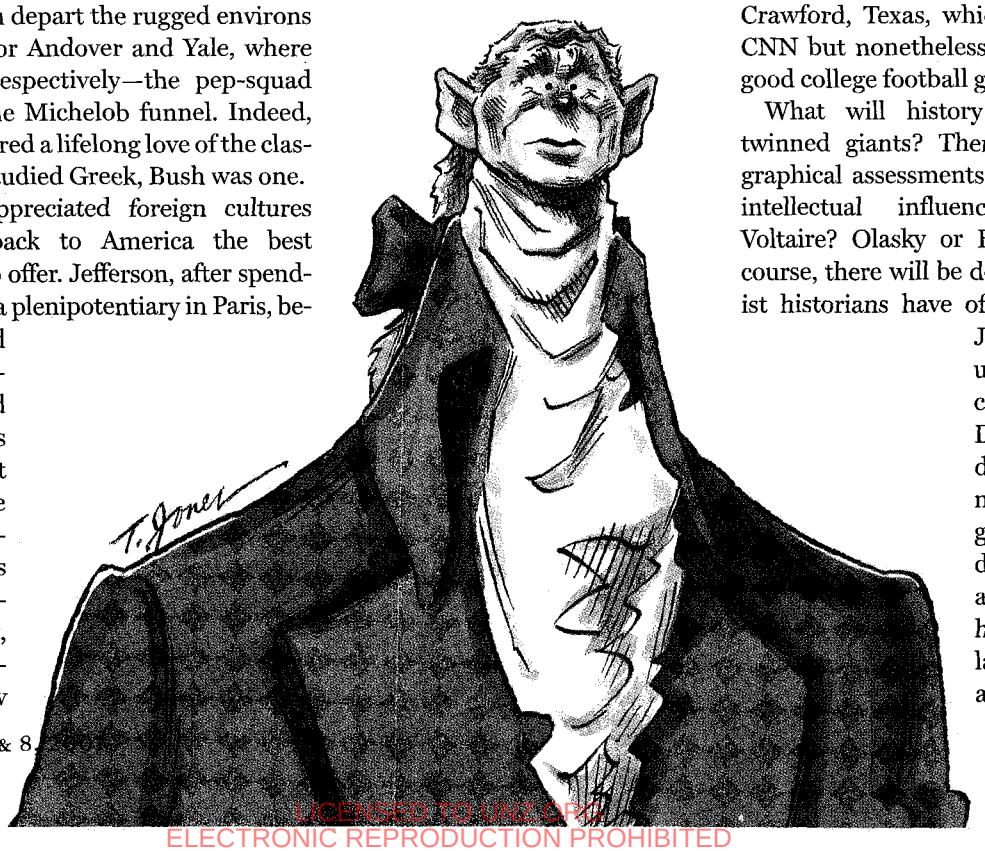
Both men appreciated foreign cultures and brought back to America the best the world had to offer. Jefferson, after spending five years as a plenipotentiary in Paris, became enamored with French literature, art, and cuisine. Bush is able to recollect at least one youthful weekend spent across the Mexican border; as a result, chicken chimichangas are now a staple at the governor's mansion.

But the concordances between the man from Midland and the sage of Monticello go deeper than the circumstances of their lives; theirs is an equality of minds. Both men loved language and its possibilities: Jefferson applauded the development of an indigenous American dialect, cautioned against an overly worshipful deference to the dictionary, and insisted upon the incorporation of new words—including "neologism" and "ideology"—into everyday speech. Bush, too, has bravely fought to broaden the national lexicon to accept such distinctly American colloquialisms as "subliminable" and "misunderestimate."

Most notably, each of these men—these *Americans*—had, upon assuming office, authored a single, powerful book. Jefferson's enigmatic *Notes on the State of Virginia* stirred the young nation to reflect on its most vital truths; Bush's equally enigmatic *A Charge to Keep* sold well in several Amarillo, Texas, bookstores. The two works, moreover, serve as complementary chapters in a longer volume on the nation's great racial wound, a call-and-answer across the centuries. TJ: "For if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another.... Indeed I tremble for my country. When I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events." GWB: "There's a trend in this country to put people into boxes. Texans don't belong in little ethnic and racial boxes.... As we head into the twenty-first century, we should have one big box: American."

To carry out their contemplations, each man occasionally retreated from the warfare of politics to the seclusion of a chosen idyll. Jefferson treasured his days at Monticello, where he refused to read partisan political journals and devoted himself to "my family, my farm, and my books." In similar fashion, Bush escaped the bustle of the Florida recount for the peace of his ranch in Crawford, Texas, which does not have CNN but nonetheless gets most of the good college football games.

What will history make of these twinned giants? There will be hagiographical assessments and debates over intellectual influences. (Locke or Voltaire? Olasky or Bullock?) And, of course, there will be doubters. Revisionist historians have of late downplayed Jefferson's individual genius in the creation of the Declaration of Independence. And no doubt Bush's genius will someday face a similar assault. In fact, perhaps sooner than later. Perhaps even as we speak. ■



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Bush jilts the right.

Central Casting

By JOHN B. JUDIS

DURING THE CAMPAIGN, conservatives were quick to distinguish between George Bush the father and George Bush the son. Unlike his father, W. was seen as a real conservative. He might feint to the center during the campaign, they said, but wait until he becomes president. Well, now he's president-elect, and he's made a raft of high-profile, remarkably centrist appointments. What do conservatives say now?

In his first major appointments—Colin Powell as secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice as national security adviser, and Andrew Card as chief of staff—Bush chose conspicuously from the Republican Party's moderate wing. Conservatives insisted that it didn't matter, since Powell and Rice do foreign policy and Card will carry out the president's wishes.

But look at W.'s emerging economic team. During the campaign, Bush was widely expected to nominate Larry Lindsey to be his secretary of the treasury. Lindsey, the author of *The Growth Experiment*, a book purporting to prove that the Reagan tax cuts benefited America, was a favorite of conservative supply-siders. But Lindsey now appears headed for a subordinate White House post as head of the Economic Policy Council, a low-status version of the National Economic Council. Instead, Bush's secretary of the treasury will be Alcoa Chairman Paul O'Neill.

There are serious questions about O'Neill's qualifications for the job. In an era when the treasury secretary must not only oversee banking and tax policy but also take a leadership role in the turbulent world economy, O'Neill will assume office with little background in international finance or standing in the world's financial community. That will worry Wall Street. What should worry conservatives, however, is that O'Neill is a raging moderate on economic policy.

For one thing, O'Neill is no supply-sider. At Bill Clinton's December 1992 economic summit in Little Rock, O'Neill actually advocated a gas tax. He's called for "environmentally sustainable development," the kind of eco-buzzword that drives right-wingers up the wall. He has proposed that the government provide health insurance to low-income Americans. He's even brought up the same criticism of the Federal Reserve that liberals usually raise: that it worries too much about inflation and not enough about jobs and growth. In 1996 O'Neill backed Democrat Felix Rohatyn for Fed vice chair. As a Democratic-leaning corporate lawyer from Alcoa's hometown of Pittsburgh puts it, "He is absolutely in the center."

Bush has appointed another oilman, Don Evans, as secretary of commerce. Evans's convictions are unknown and perhaps not all that important, since the commerce job, particularly in Republican administrations, has simply become a way to reward big fund-raisers. More significant will be Bush's picks for director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and for secretary of labor.

During the campaign, rumor had it that Bush was considering Barry McBee, whom he had appointed chairman of Texas's infamous Natural Resource Conservation Commission, for the EPA job. But, as with the treasury appointment, conservative names have given way to moderate ones as the campaign has turned into the transition. Instead of McBee, a hard-core deregulator, Bush's leading candidate for the EPA post is now New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman. Granted, Whitman has her critics in the environmental movement. But she has promoted conservation and stopped the dumping of toxic sludge in the Atlantic Ocean. During her 1997 reelection campaign, Whitman even announced she was joining the Sierra Club. Bush's other prospects, former Illinois EPA Director Mary Gade and the state's current director, Tom Skinner, are also moderates. In fact, Gade has already come under fire from conservatives for backing a global-warming treaty.

IN HIS APPOINTMENTS as Texas governor, Bush regularly snubbed labor—refusing to name union representatives even to the state commissions on which they had traditionally served. And in selecting his secretary of labor, Bush's conservatism might show through. He may pick former Missouri Representative Jim Talent, a former St. Louis lawyer who specialized in fighting workers on behalf of management. As a House member, Talent chaired the Small Business Committee and sponsored legislation weakening OSHA enforcement. He also championed a bill mandating that working welfare recipients not be covered by the minimum wage.

But Bush is also considering a centrist, Connecticut Governor John Rowland. Like most Eastern and Midwestern governors, Rowland is used to dealing with a unionized workforce. And, while he has had his battles with organized labor, he's not implacably hostile to it. He was even denounced by *Reason* magazine as a "pushover" for labor because he gave state approval to an organizing drive among nursing-home workers.

Go down the list of other leading candidates for prominent Bush administration jobs—people like Montana Governor Marc Racicot for attorney general (instead of the more conservative Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating or Missouri Senator John Ashcroft), former New York Representative Reverend Floyd Flake for secretary of education, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson for secretary of health and human services, and former Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith as a White House adviser on domestic policy—and there's not a real right-winger in the bunch.

It's no wonder why: Bush is a conciliator. In Texas, his conservatism was really just a middle ground between a very right-wing Republican Party and the state's moderate Democrats. In Washington, though, where there are greater numbers of moderate Republicans and the Democrats are further to the left, Bush, to adopt a conciliatory stance, will have to move a bit to the left himself. And where would that put him? Absolutely in the center. ■

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On the Hill

High Chairs

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

WHEN REPUBLICAN REVOLUTIONARIES took over the House in 1995, they vowed to turn it into a "citizen legislature." Disgusted by the arrogance of crusty Democratic barons like Dan Rostenkowski and John Dingell, the Gingrichites decreed a new, more democratic order in which committee chairmanships would be limited to six years. No longer would congressional despots spend decades accumulating power and doling out favors over martini lunches. Under the new system, chairmanships would be assigned not by seniority but through a Darwinian contest of ideas and talent. The new system, declared New York Representative Gerald Solomon, "brings back to the people's House these intangible words of openness and fairness and accountability."

That was the idea, anyway. But, like so many revolutionaries before them, the GOP radicals didn't count on human nature—in particular, the human nature of politicians. This January, as the first round of powerful chairmanships open up, the struggle to claim them is looking less like a Darwinian contest than an old-fashioned congressional pork-and-ego fest.

No chairmanship race better epitomizes the general tenor than the fight to succeed Ways and Means Chairman Bill Archer, who decided to retire rather than endure life without a gavel. The rivals for his throne, conservative Illinois Representative Philip Crane and moderate Californian Bill Thomas, are not exactly drawing up competing tax plans; they're bludgeoning each other with personal attacks. Take Crane's letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert suggesting that the famously ornery Thomas is too nasty for the job. "Never in my entire tenure in Congress," wrote Crane, "have I allowed my temper to insult, berate, or offend a colleague"—implying ever so subtly that his opponent has spent his career doing exactly that.

Nor have the changes in the rules prevented Crane from flaunting his seniority. When he appeared before the GOP steering committee that elects chairmen, the 30-year veteran conspicuously sported a rusty lapel pin commemorating a 1980 IRA bill he co-authored. When the website *www.tax.org* conducted an online poll asking readers which man should prevail, a Crane aide sent out a mass e-mail with an urgent request: "Please go online and vote for my boss." A group of pro-Crane California Republicans are also trashing Thomas's opposition to a symbolic provision safeguarding the voting rights of military personnel ("Aren't members of Congress supposed to support the right to vote?"). This well-coordinated campaign has made Thomas's effort—which has consisted in part of handing out California pistachios to steering committee members—look like peanuts.

Other contenders are relying on veiled threats. Louisiana's Billy Tauzin, a former Democrat competing with Ohio Representative Michael Oxley to chair the Commerce Committee, has warned colleagues that denying him the job could deter other would-be party-switchers. New Jersey's Marge Roukema implied that denying her leadership of the Banking Committee would constitute sexism. And beyond the threatening efforts are the merely pathetic ones—like Representative Jim Nussle, who circulated a letter answering concerns that he is too eccentric to be Budget Committee chairman: "While some may continue to associate me with my famous speech with a paper bag over my head, I believe I [have] worked in a respectful and deliberate way."

Commonplace are glossy "briefing books," in which contestants list, ad infinitum, their qualifications. There are so many reasons South Carolina's Curt Weldon should be Armed Services chairman that it cost him $17,000 just to print them up. No one is immune to the humiliation—not even revered elder statesmen like Henry Hyde. Soon to be bumped from his beloved Judiciary Committee chairmanship, the silver-haired Hyde recently abased himself before the steering committee, nine-page curriculum vitae in hand, for a shot at chair of International Relations. Nussle, meanwhile, called his trip to the steering committee's basement office "a nerve-racking event."

But that's the price of a "citizen legislature," right? Actually, no. *That* price is better measured in the vast sums candidates must raise to win their colleagues' support. Conservative Louisiana Representative Richard Baker, who is competing with Roukema for Banking, even sent out a seven-page "Fund-raising Activity Report" reminding colleagues how much money he's given them. Commerce wanna-chairmen Tauzin and Oxley outdid each another with competing fund-raising bashes at the Republican Convention. And Crane spokesman Bryce Dustman notes proudly that his boss raised $2.5 million for House candidates over the past two years, including more than $800,000 for a special fund overseen by Hastert. If this leads you to suspect chairmanships are for sale, you're not alone: Those who've lagged in the fund-raising race agree. "I don't think," sniped Roukema in *The Washington Post*, "our Republican Party wants to be known as a party where you can buy a chairmanship."

And where does the money fueling all this "openness and fairness and accountability" come from? The very corporations over which would-be chairmen preside, of course. Baker owes much of his fund-raising edge to banks and mortgage insurers that stand to gain if he delivers on his pledge to scale back federal preferences for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Similarly, flat-taxer Crane has gotten a financial boost from anti-tax enterprises because, as one tax lobbyist confessed to *The Washington Times*, Thomas "is not as pliable . . . they can't intimidate him as easily."

Ego battles, shameless fund-raising, massive corporate influence—sounds like old times. "I was here at the end of the committee baron period," one aide to a senior Republican says. "And, man, the power was vested in the committee chairmanships. They had a lock on the joint." But, seeing the chaos today, he adds: "I don't know what's worse." ■

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2002 won't be the Democrats' year.

Safe House

By NOAM SCHEIBER

LISTENING TO THE media in recent weeks, you'd think Democrats were practically giddy at the prospect of a Bush presidency. "We know that historically the party that holds the White House loses seats in Congress in their first midterm election," instructed *USA Today*'s Susan Page. *U.S. News & World Report*'s David Gergen concurred: "If Bush wins, Democrats will assume they can capture the Congress in 2002 and destroy Bush by the end of his first term." CBS's Bill Plante even suggested that "[t]here are prominent Democrats who probably secretly hope that [Gore] doesn't make it.... [T]hey feel that if George W. Bush takes power, they'll have a better chance of regaining control of the Senate and House." And when you consider how ugly Bush's victory was, the GOP majority doesn't look just tenuous; it looks downright imperiled.

Or so you'd think. But a closer investigation of the likely dynamics of the 2002 battle for the House of Representatives suggests a different picture. (The Senate is another matter.) Not only will the Democrats have trouble picking up the five seats they need to regain the majority, but they face an uphill battle just to avoid losing ground.

For starters, there's reapportionment, the decade-opening ritual that adjusts each state's congressional delegation to reflect shifts in population. And the soon-to-be-released results of the 2000 census don't bode well for Democrats. Consistent with the long-term migration from the Northeast, the Rust Belt, and the Midwest to the Sun Belt—and the corresponding migration from industrial centers to suburbs—it's mostly Republican states that stand to gain seats: Arizona (two seats), Texas (two), Colorado (one), Florida (one), and Georgia (one). By contrast, the states likely to lose one seat (Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin) or two (New York and Pennsylvania) generally lean Democratic.

And with reapportionment comes redistricting, as states redraw congressional maps to reflect population changes. But, because it's state legislatures that do the redrawing, redistricting is not simply an exercise in cartography. As Anthony Weiner, a Democratic representative from New York, explains, "The number-one job of redistricting is to preserve incumbents [of your own party]" and, conversely, to make the opposition party's incumbents vulnerable. With Republican-controlled legislatures presiding over many key redistricting battles—particularly those in Colorado, Florida, and Pennsylvania—expect Democrats to lose on this front, too.

Further undermining House Democrats' chances is the fact that, come 2002, some of them may not want to stick around. After small but consistent gains for the Democrats in 1996 and 1998, Minority Leader Dick Gephardt talked several older House Democrats out of retiring by assuring them that they would once again taste life in the majority. But falling short despite the party's Herculean efforts has proved a huge disappointment. In the words of one House Democrat, this year's narrow defeat has prompted "a certain amount of hard depression," making it tougher for Gephardt to keep his veterans from packing it in. Even a member of the Democratic leadership, Steering Committee Co-chair Steny Hoyer, concedes that "each time it gets more difficult, because each time the road seems longer."

Several of the Democrats thought likely to retire—Ike Skelton from Missouri, Earl Pomeroy from North Dakota, and Norman Sisisky from Virginia—represent districts that could turn Republican. And retirement isn't the only reason House Democrats may leave. With Republicans forced to defend 20 Senate seats (compared with only 14 for Democrats) and with several key governorships up for grabs, many House Democrats will probably seek higher office, including some—like Mark Udall in Colorado, John Baldacci in Maine, and Bob Etheridge in North Carolina—who now hold swing seats. While Gephardt will pressure them to stay, one House member confides that almost no one "turns down a shot at winning higher office for a chance to win the House."

Analysts who predict a Democratic landslide in 2002 cite the historical record. The standard explanation for why parties experience a midterm slump goes like this: Candidates for president make all sorts of ambitious promises on the campaign trail, promises they can't uphold in office. So, after the inevitable disappointment, voters take the first opportunity to register their disillusionment: the midterm elections.

But that's only half the story. To transform voter disappointment into significant losses for the president's party, voters must blame not just the president himself but the president's party as a whole. And for this to happen, congressional races must be nationalized—that is, the opposition party must turn 435 local races into a single referendum.

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Yet if there's one generalization that can be made about the most recent election cycle—and probably about the 1998 cycle as well—it's that individual House races were fought on their own terms. Voters reelected nearly 98 percent of both parties' incumbents, even more than the 95 percent average of the last 40 years. Moreover, it was local rather than national issues that defined the most tightly contested races. During impeachment, many in the press predicted that the GOP's assault on Bill Clinton would define Election 2000. It didn't. Instead, impeachment manager Jim Rogan's fate hinged on his Armenian-American constituents, Connecticut Democrat Sam Gejdenson went down over an obscure Indian-land issue, and Republican Mark Kirk won an open seat in suburban Chicago by focusing on local environmental problems.

Today, many predict that a backlash against Bush's tainted win could sweep Democrats into office in 2002. They're probably wrong again. For one thing, voters' memories aren't that long. For another, the sophistication of today's polling technology makes it almost impossible for either side to exploit partywide advantages. As the 2000 elections neared, for example, Democrats saw polls indicating that Republicans were vulnerable because of their opposition to prescription-drug benefits and a patients' bill of rights. And the polls were right. The problem was that Republicans saw them, too. So, rather than "stand and fight like good Reaganites," as Massachusetts Democrat Barney Frank puts it, vulnerable Republicans co-opted the issues—which localized the races all over again.

WHAT'S MORE, ONE of the traditional causes of the midterm jinx probably won't be a factor in 2002. When a president wins by a decisive majority, he tends to drag weak candidates into office along with him—what congressional analyst Stuart Rothenberg calls "political deadwood." Not surprisingly, it's this deadwood that gets washed away when public opinion turns. (This also explains why the midterm effect is generally more pronounced in a president's second term: Second-term presidents tend to win by bigger margins, dragging even more deadwood into office along with them.)

But when a president wins narrowly, the coattail effect is next to nil. And, with no coattails, his party has few weak links to protect in the midterm election. Consider 1962. Having defeated Richard Nixon in one of the closest presidential races in history, John F. Kennedy suffered a string of foreign policy blunders and domestic defeats during his first two years in office. But in the midterm elections congressional Democrats came away virtually unscathed, losing only a single seat in the House and actually gaining seats in the Senate. Needless to say, if Kennedy's coattails were short, W.'s are nonexistent.

None of which is to say the Democrats *can't* win back the House in 2002. If the Republicans read a mandate into their razor-thin majorities and revive "implementation of the rest of the Contract with America," as Tom DeLay henchman John Doolittle suggested earlier this month, the Democrats might be able to renationalize the 2002 election. Ditto if there's a severe recession, which can stigmatize the party in the White House.

But, short of that, House Democrats have no real cause for optimism. And, while the media may not understand that, many Democrats themselves actually do. As one Democratic member recently told me, trying to put the best spin on a difficult situation, "I don't think anyone's walking around thinking, 'My God, there's never going to be a Democratic Congress in my lifetime again.'" If that's optimism, what does pessimism sound like? ■

Our shy, retiring female senators.

Sugar and Spice

By MICHELLE COTTLE

> "Remember . . . a woman worker is not a man; in many jobs she is a substitute—like plastics instead of metal—she has special characteristics that lend themselves to new and sometimes much superior uses."
>
> —from *You're Going to Employ Women*, a 1943 pamphlet issued by the U.S. secretary of war

FACING A LABOR shortage during World War II, the War Department launched a p.r. campaign to convince male supervisors of the special virtues of female workers. Flash forward more than half a century, and our federal government once again confronts difficult circumstances that, we are told, cry out for a woman's touch. President-elect George W. Bush must work with a Senate that is split 50-50—and more than a little polarized by the Florida nastiness. At first glance, the horizon would seem impossibly grim for our new uniter-in-chief.

Women to the rescue. The Senate will feature a record 13 of them in 2001—nine returning, four freshly elected. And, as a recent news story in *The New York Times* cheerily noted, more chicks means more comity. Female lawmakers bring a "different sensibility" to the job, an appreciation of kindly, courteous behavior "that the women of the Senate say will make them especially valuable on Capitol Hill next year." Susan Collins, the Republican gentlewoman from Maine, assured *Times* readers, "My experience has been that women tend to be better at working across the aisles and are more pragmatic and results-oriented." Texas Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison added that women "try to make people feel more comfortable and ease anxieties."

Indeed, as far as the women of the Senate are concerned, difference feminism is alive and well. In *Nine and Counting*, last summer's book by and about the Senate sisters, Maryland Democrat Barbara Mikulski tells Hutchison,

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"Civility must start with us." In last July's *Cosmopolitan*, Arkansas Democrat Blanche Lambert Lincoln explained how the Senate women "promote a feeling of solidarity" even as they "derive strength from our differences." And when two co-authors of *Nine and Counting* appeared on "Larry King Live" this month, the *Times* raved, "There was no shrillness, no hysterics, no attempts at the one-upmanship so common among their male colleagues." If W. looks to the ladies, it seems, he'll have a base of civility from which to operate.

YEAH, RIGHT. IN his attempts at conflict resolution, for instance, Bush II could take cues from California Democrat Barbara Boxer. Mild-mannered, gracious, and quick to compromise, Boxer patiently and quietly searches for common ground. Take the sensitive issue of sexual harassment. As a House member in 1991, Boxer had some concerns about the way her Senate colleagues were handling the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas. So she led several female colleagues in an unprecedented march on the Senate, slamming the institution as a "men's club." Four years and a successful Senate race later, she pressed so diplomatically for hearings on the allegations against Republican Senator Bob Packwood that Ethics Committee Chairman Mitch McConnell threatened a retaliatory jihad against the Democrats. "He basically poked his finger at me and said, 'I am going after Ted Kennedy,'" Boxer later recalled. Bottom line: Boxer is a bomb-throwing, fire-breathing publicity hound whose typical response to troubled waters is to throw on some gasoline and strike a match. Following the Packwood episode, no less a Senate eminence than then-Majority Leader Bob Dole dubbed her "the most partisan senator I have ever known."

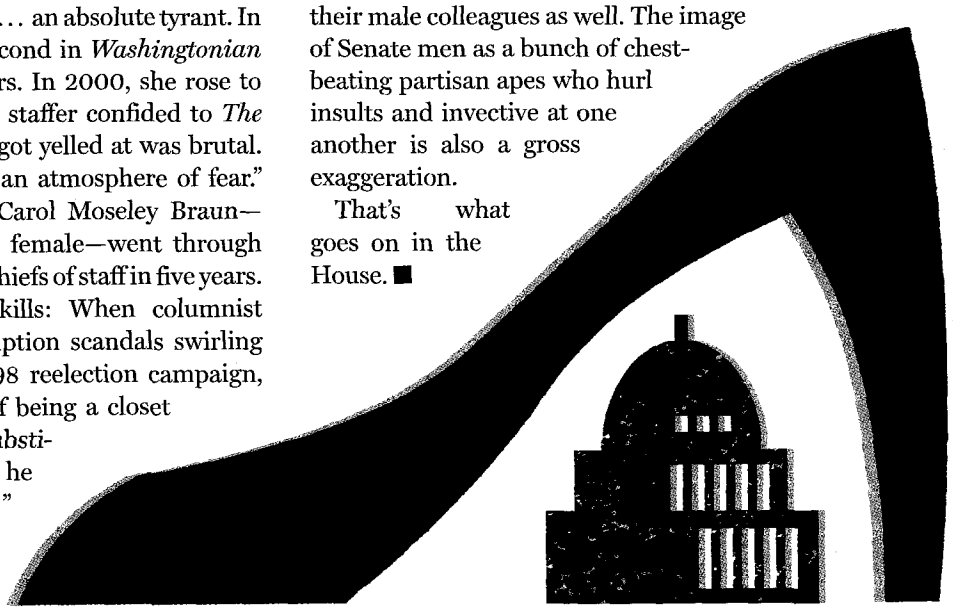
But, of course, a lawmaker's public persona is only part of the package. The way women senators interact with their staff in private often provides a truer picture of the people skills characteristic of their gender. On the Senate floor, for instance, Mikulski, a populist partisan described as "gritty," "brusque," and "aggressive," is known as a tough cookie. But behind closed doors she is reputedly... an absolute tyrant. In 1998, Senate staffers ranked her second in *Washingtonian* magazine's list of "meanest" senators. In 2000, she rose to number one. As a former Mikulski staffer confided to *The Washington Post*, "The way people got yelled at was brutal. It could be humiliating.... It was an atmosphere of fear." Similarly, former Illinois Senator Carol Moseley Braun—another famously shy and retiring female—went through staffers like Kleenex, including five chiefs of staff in five years. As for Braun's communication skills: When columnist George Will detailed various corruption scandals swirling around the senator during her 1998 reelection campaign, Braun oh-so-gently accused Will of being a closet Klansman whose criticism was "a substitute for his hood." "I think because he couldn't say 'nigger' he said 'corrupt,'" she barked.

And then there is that quintessentially female virtue: the ability to listen. Take the incoming senator from Washington state, Maria Cantwell. Critics say she's "cold," but her supporters vehemently reject the charge, insisting she's simply "private" and "aloof." Better yet, she reportedly has the adorable habit of walking away from people in the middle of a conversation—a quirk sure to win Cantwell points with senior egos on both sides of the aisle. Or consider Hutchison, a Southern lady so shy, retiring, and nonpartisan that, as *The Washington Post* reported last May, she "pressured Majority Leader Trent Lott into denying Democrats votes on a handful of their amendments that would have put Republicans on the spot." And need I even mention the invariably open, never competitive, resolutely nonpartisan great communicator newly elected to represent the state of New York?

CLEARLY, SOME MEMBERS of the Senate sisterhood conform to gender stereotypes more than others. Washington state Democrat Patty Murray, for instance, is so passive and unassuming you might call her an "empty pantsuit." (She, too, made *Washingtonian*'s 2000 "Best and Worst" list, as both the Senate's number-one dimmest bulb and its number-three "weakest spine.") Similarly, soft-spoken moderates like Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins rarely ruffle feathers.

But soft-spoken moderates like Jim Jeffords and Paul Sarbanes don't ruffle many feathers, either. And just because some women senators are conciliatory, why should they all pretend to be? Certainly those of us who work in majority-male environs can sympathize with women's desire to stick together (some days the testosterone level at THE NEW REPUBLIC is so high I worry about being stricken with male-pattern baldness), but that doesn't mean indulging in the dippy female stereotypes that lead men to believe women aren't really equipped to play in the big leagues. Women aren't inherently warm or nurturing or accommodating. In fact, they're not inherently anything—which is what America might learn from their growing political profile if the women senators themselves would stop cooing about their great civil sorority. Besides, the notion that Senate chicks are invariably sweet caricatures their male colleagues as well. The image of Senate men as a bunch of chest-beating partisan apes who hurl insults and invective at one another is also a gross exaggeration.

That's what goes on in the House. ■



STEPHEN SAVAGE

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Colin Powell's out-of-date foreign policy.

Yesterday's Man

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

IN HIS PENTAGON office, not far from the picture of a camouflaged Serb gun emplacement he used to ward off civilians pressing for air strikes in Bosnia, General Colin Powell kept an epigram from Thucydides. "Of all manifestations of power," it instructs, "restraint impresses men most." Let's hope Thucydides was right. Because, with Powell's elevation to secretary of state, you're going to hear a lot over the next four years about the virtues of restraint in foreign policy. The word is already a mantra within Team Bush, the perfect antonym—and antidote—to the Clinton administration's "promiscuous" military activism. And Powell is the creed's embodiment. To the new administration, he brings a great deal of gravitas, along with a rather straightforward view of American military power: Don't use it.

This restraint, Powell likes to say, stems from his background as a soldier, one who recognizes the human costs of war. But Powell's views aren't inherent in the experience of war; they reflect the particular grievances and assumptions of the post-Vietnam officer corps (see "The Legend of Colin Powell," by Charles Lane, TNR, April 17, 1995). "Vietnam," explains strategist Eliot Cohen, "has become the defense establishment's morality play, a cautionary tale of civilian meddling, military timidity, and ensuing—but unnecessary—disaster." Or, as Powell put it in his autobiography, "Many of my generation [of Vietnam-era officers] vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in halfhearted warfare for half-baked reasons that the American people could not understand."

That one sentence contains the three central ingredients of Powell's worldview. The first, now canonical in the officer corps, is that military leaders should not "quietly acquiesce" to judgments by their civilian superiors about the use of force. The second, which has been enshrined in a doctrine named after Powell, is the refusal to wage "halfhearted warfare," the insistence that every potential military engagement requires either overwhelming force or none at all. But the Powell Doctrine addresses more than just how to fight wars; it also addresses *when* to fight them—namely, for "vital interests," not for "half-baked reasons" like "nation-building" and "humanitarianism." Powell summarizes his doctrine this way: "[I]s the national interest at stake? If the answer is yes, go in, and go in to win. Otherwise, stay out." Sounds reasonable enough. Just not for the world the Bushies are about to inherit.

In fact, the Powell Doctrine was already irrelevant when Powell was preaching it a decade ago. Which is what makes the Bush team's talk of reviving it so puzzling. As a template for how and when to use force in the post-cold-war era, the doctrine has proved next to useless. The disconnect between Powell's worldview and the world in which we happen to live is apparent from the general's own record. Had Powell been secretary of state at the time, America would have turned a blind eye to, among other things, Serb depredations in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and even Iraqi aggression in Kuwait. "The Powell Doctrine," says Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, "can be read as a reason to stay out of any conflicts except Desert Storm." And that's pretty much how Powell himself has read it. Except that he opposed Desert Storm as well.

There is no small irony in the fact that Powell's superhero stature derives from his performance during the Gulf war—and from his masterful performance during press briefings, particularly the one at which he said, in reference to the Iraqi army, "We are going to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it." Not a few of his fellow officers found this absurd. For nearly every time Powell's opinions were solicited during the Iraq crisis, he offered the opposite advice. In the war's aftermath, then-Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger insisted, "I know personally that if Colin had had his druthers we would not have fought the Iraq war. President Bush and Brent Scowcroft pushed him into it." This appears to have been true from the outset. First, Powell dismissed intelligence reports predicting an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and opposed a show of naval force to deter one. Then, when the invasion did occur, Powell steadfastly argued against reversing it. "The American people do not want their young dying for $1.50-a-gallon oil," Powell declared in internal deliberations. "We can't make a case for losing lives for Kuwait." Writing about the arguments of Powell and others, Scowcroft recounts that he "was frankly appalled at the undertone of the discussion, which suggested resignation to the invasion and even adaptation to a fait accompli."

The Powell Doctrine's admonitions about limited war notwithstanding, the general's reluctance to go to war against Iraq was matched only by his eagerness to limit the conflict once it started. The day after the ground offensive began, Powell was already pressing for an end to hostilities. After only four days of fighting, and although American units had yet to encircle Iraqi forces, Powell convinced President Bush to halt ground operations. "The vaunted Republican Guard formations are no longer," the general announced. But he was wrong. Their escape routes clear, three largely intact Republican Guard infantry divisions simply packed up and went back to Iraq—where Guard units promptly began massac-

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ring the civilians the United States had encouraged to revolt.

It was there, in the marshes of southern Iraq and the mountains of the Kurdish north, that Powell's antipathy to "humanitarian" interventions was first brought to bear. When the extent of the Guard's assault became clear, he lobbied vociferously—and successfully—against stopping Iraqi helicopter attacks. Powell denies that "if Saddam had fallen, he would necessarily have been replaced by a Jeffersonian in some sort of desert democracy where people read *The Federalist Papers* along with the Koran." But the issue wasn't whether Iraqi rebels had any use for *The Federalist Papers*. It was whether to aid those we had encouraged to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. And Powell argued not only that we shouldn't but that leaving the regime in place would actually further the aim of stability in the Middle East. Nine years later, we are still living with the fruits of that wisdom.

BARELY A YEAR after the Iraqi uprisings collapsed, famine in Somalia once more forced Powell to exercise strategic judgment. And, once more, he flubbed. As in the Gulf, Powell opposed the part of the Somali mission that worked, while bearing considerable responsibility for the part that failed—namely, the events that led to the pointless loss of 18 American GIs. For months, Powell stayed true to his doctrine and resisted arguments for a large-scale humanitarian operation. But public pressure, fueled by televised images of starving Somalis, finally changed his mind in late November 1992. The initial relief operation was a success—so much so that the Marines had barely finished storming the beach when Powell began pulling them out, and the United States transferred formal control of the operation to the United Nations. In fact, the mission was far from over, and catastrophe, rather than success, loomed.

"We sent Task Force Ranger with the greatest reluctance," Powell told a Senate panel, referring to the ill-fated assault to capture Somali General Mohamed Farah Aideed. He claims he sent the Rangers merely out of a belief "in supporting the commander in the field." But that's not quite right. Before he died, Les Aspin recalled receiving a phone call from Powell during which the general momentarily strayed from his doctrine and urged the defense secretary to dispatch commandos to catch Aideed. President Clinton, too, in a recent interview with *The New Yorker*'s Joel Klein, quotes Powell as saying, "Somebody needs to try to arrest [Aideed], and we're the only people with the capacity to do it."

Powell, however, let Aspin take the blame for the ensuing disaster. In particular, Powell has made much of the fact that the defense secretary denied the field commander's request for additional tanks. "I had done what I had to do," Powell writes of his efforts to lobby Aspin for the armor, "a soldier backing soldiers." What Powell doesn't mention is that, in the interest of avoiding further escalation, he had denied an equally important request to dispatch AC-130 gunships for the raid. Though Powell denies any recollection of the request, General Joseph Hoar, then head of U.S. Central Command, and General Wayne Downing, then head of U.S. Special Forces Command, remember it well. "General Powell advised that we needed to keep the numbers down," Downing recalls. Powell, he says, "was concerned about mission creep."

Fear of "mission creep" distorted Powell's strategic judgment in the Balkans, as well. As he did in the Gulf, Powell vocally opposed the use of force from the outset. So, too, of course, did the Bush administration. In 1992, however, White House and State Department officials began to consider establishing a no-fly zone to protect Bosnians from Serb air attacks. Powell went ballistic. "Before we start shooting up everybody just so everybody can have something to write about," the general demanded publicly, "let's see if the [diplomatic] démarche works." In any case, said Powell, "I do not know how limited bombing will stop the Serbs from doing what they are doing." Not that he would have proved more amenable to a *sustained* bombing campaign. The United States, Powell complained, had no "vital interest" in the Balkans. "No American president could defend to the American people the heavy sacrifice of lives it would cost to resolve this baffling conflict."

Powell's position only hardened after Clinton took office. In his former job as House Armed Services Committee chairman, Aspin had argued forcefully against applying the Powell Doctrine to Bosnia. "If we say it is all or nothing and then walk away," Aspin protested, "we are sending a signal . . . that there is no downside to ethnic cleansing." He continued to make the case during his first months at the Pentagon. "There it was again," Powell recalls of the case for bombing, "the ever-popular solution from the skies, with a good humanist twist." Acutely aware of the general's stature, the Clinton team quickly caved. "So long as [Powell] didn't want to bomb," claims a former White House official, "we weren't going to bomb." America would have to wait for Powell to retire before it put a halt to the killing.

THE APPEAL OF the Powell Doctrine is its simplicity. Alas, in Bosnia, Somalia, and the Gulf, it offered clarity only because it counseled inaction. The essence of the doctrine is its hostility to limited war. "As soon as they tell me it is limited," Powell said during the Bosnia debate, "it means they do not care whether you achieve a result or not." But in Bosnia and then in Kosovo, limited war achieved precisely the results Powell had declared unachievable. Doing violence to Clausewitz, Powell declaims with pride that, during his tenure at the Pentagon, "we were able to constantly bring the political decisions back to what we could do militarily." But Powell has things backward. It is political ends that shape military means. When the reverse occurs, as it did in the Gulf, the result is likely to be an aesthetically pleasing military victory alongside political defeat. By contrast, the military assault in the Balkans appeared less impressive. But it set in motion a sequence of events that rid Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic, while Saddam Hussein still rules in Baghdad a decade after the Gulf war.

Powell professes in his autobiography to have been "astonished by the death grip of old ideas on some military minds." But Powell himself is in the clutches of such a grip. Though it served America well in Panama and might do so again in the event of war on the Korean peninsula, his doctrine offers a

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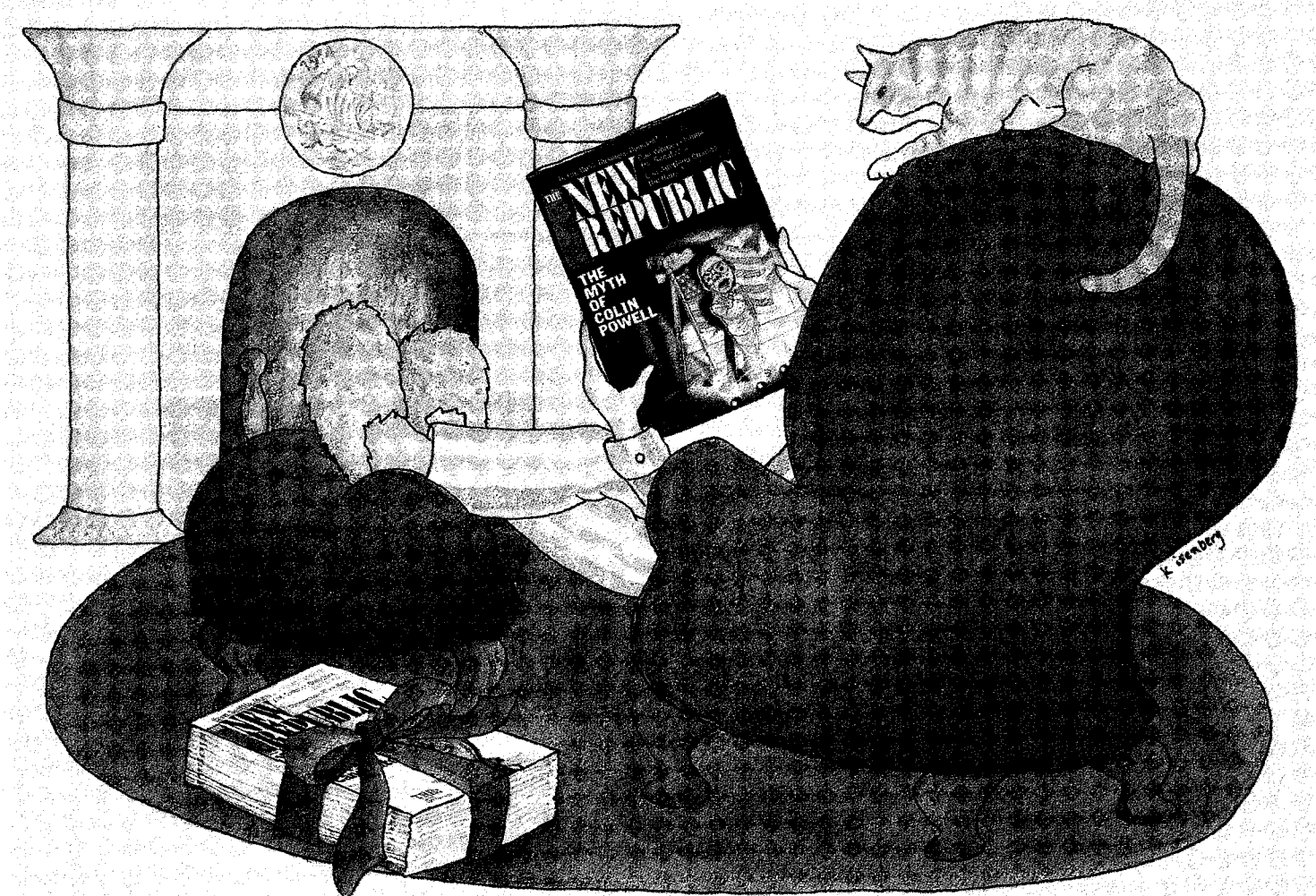

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singularly inapt guide for the future Kosovos, Bosnias, and Somalias to which U.S. forces will be obliged to respond. These sorts of unconventional conflicts and constabulary operations simply do not lend themselves to an "all or nothing" approach. Strict adherence to the Powell Doctrine means no peacekeeping missions, no punitive air strikes, no humanitarian interventions—in short, no operation the U.S. military seems likely to be asked to perform in the near future.

But, then, that's the whole point. Powell will be secretary of state, not secretary of defense (at least not formally), and the Powell Doctrine's theory of fighting wars entails a theory of foreign policy as well: crabbed realism. America, Powell has said, should act only in those instances where "the cold calculus of national interest" is at stake. "In none of these recent foreign crises," Powell writes in his autobiography, "have we had a vital interest such as we had after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the resulting threat to Saudi Arabia and the free flow of oil. These later crises do not affect any of our treaty obligations or our survival as a nation." The new secretary of state has no use for "nation-building," a phrase that reminds him of Vietnam. And, in opposing U.S. intervention, he is quick to trot out the relativist clichés that so often provide cover for isolationists. Powell's realism, in fact, often seems to derive less from the writings of Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger than from *Reader's Digest*. The United States should not intervene in Bosnia because the conflict has "deep ethnic and religious roots that go back a thousand years," he wrote in a 1992 *New York Times* op-ed. Nor should America aid the Iraqi insurgents, lest it end up "trying to sort out two thousand years of Mesopotamian history."

But, even in cold strategic terms, Powell's brand of foreign policy restraint is out of place in today's world. His definition of vital interests as consisting merely of sea-lanes, oil wells, and canals would, if enshrined in official policy, translate into the abdication of American leadership. "In the aftermath of the cold war," says Andrew Bacevich, a professor of international relations at Boston University and a retired Army colonel, "we have shouldered global responsibilities, including enforcing international norms, which Powell's vital-interest criteria simply fail to address." When America refused to act in Bosnia, for instance, the humanitarian crisis quickly began to threaten a vital American interest—the stability of the Atlantic alliance. Powell may not like it, but the United States remains the hinge of the international system. And when it sits idly by in the face of threats to that system, international order erodes. Quickly.

Finally, there is the question of how well-suited Powell's realism is to the American temper. In his speech last week accepting his new post, Powell lectured about the wonders of technology, mass communication, and other hallmarks of globalization. But those very media make it harder to oppose all humanitarian interventions—indeed, they helped force Powell himself to act in Somalia. More than anywhere else, the "CNN effect," as it has come to be known, is keenly felt in the United States, where televised images of starving children and brutalized innocents routinely prompt public demands that something be done. To imagine, then, that Powell can play Metternich for a nation of soccer moms is sheer illusion. Nor should he: Powell's vital-interest standard denies that America stands for anything more than material interest. Under its terms, indeed, American foreign policy would become indistinguishable from that of a frankly cynical country like France.

But it's not just that Powell has lousy ideas. The real danger is that, unlike in Poppy's White House, there won't be anyone around to pour cold water on them. "Powell's going to be running the show [on foreign policy]," says a source close to the Bushies. "The others are window dressing."

To be sure, Powell and the president he will overshadow offer basically the same foreign policy perspective. Still, they differ on some key issues. Powell, for instance, has endorsed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which Bush opposes. Powell, too, is less worried about Iraq than either Bush or his national security team, some of whose members have even spoken of "detaching" a portion of the country. And when W. finds himself in conflict with his secretary of state, he may be in for a rude surprise. For, as Poppy's crew discovered a decade ago, Powell does not advise. He insists.

HENCE POWELL'S THIRD signature trait: his reluctance to accept political judgments with which he disagrees. Of all our military leaders, notes former chief Air Force historian and University of North Carolina Professor Richard Kohn, Powell was "the most political since Douglas MacArthur." It was under his tenure, he adds, "that civilian control eroded most since the rise of the military establishment in the 1940s and 1950s." In 1990, without guidance or authorization from Defense Secretary Dick Cheney or any other civilian superior (and in the face of considerable civilian opposition), Powell drafted and began speaking publicly about his plans to restructure the Armed Forces to match his forecasts of the international scene. A year later, when he clashed with the Bush team again—this time over the buildup of U.S. forces in the Gulf—the secretary of defense had to admonish Powell repeatedly to leave political matters to civilians. "[Y]ou're not secretary of state," Cheney lectured him on one occasion. "You're not the national security adviser anymore. And you're not secretary of defense. So stick to military matters." But Powell wouldn't.

As President Bush gave way to President Clinton, the general's protests only grew more vocal. First, in October 1992, Powell went public with his opposition to using force in Bosnia, penning an unprecedented *New York Times* op-ed justifying his stance. Powell cleared the missive with the Bush team, but, coming at the height of a presidential election in which candidate Clinton was calling for forceful action to halt Milosevic, the intent was clear—all the more so when Powell reiterated his objections in a *Foreign Affairs* article published as Clinton prepared for his inaugural. "Whether the issue was military service for homosexuals, post-Soviet budget levels, or military action in ex-Yugoslavia," recounts strategist Edward Luttwak, "Powell overruled the newly inaugurated Clinton with contemptuous ease." In at least one instance—the 1993 dustup over gays in the military—Powell skirted the edge of insubordination. Seizing on Clinton's weak position vis-à-vis the Armed Forces, Powell went public with his oppo-

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sition to the president's plans for integrating homosexuals into the military, letting it be known that he might resign over the issue and humiliating Clinton into negotiating with—and all but surrendering to—his own military chiefs.

And this was when Powell was in uniform. Now that he's free from the constraints of military professionalism, such as they were, he's likely to show even less deference to his colleagues in the Bush administration. Who, after all, is there to stand in his way? Condoleezza Rice? Powell dwarfs her in both stature and intellect. Cheney? The ink on Powell's State Department appointment had barely run dry last week when he began challenging the vice president-elect over Pentagon nominees. Dan Coats? His likely deputy defense secretary, Richard Armitrage, is one of Powell's closest confidants. How about W. himself? If Powell questioned Poppy's considerable foreign policy experience, it seems unlikely he'll defer to his much less knowledgeable son. Last week's press conference, during which Powell lectured about his foreign policy priorities while Bush stood mutely beside him, offered an early glimpse of what lies ahead.

Indeed, it is strange that a family that prizes loyalty would reward a figure who so distinctly lacks it. This, after all, is the same General Powell who during the run-up to the Gulf war covered his rear by letting Bob Woodward know what a dumb idea he thought the whole thing was. The same General Powell who let his former boss Les Aspin take the fall for Somalia, a disaster that was equally of his own making. And the same General Powell who hung Bill Clinton out to dry on gays in the military. Appointing a national icon to be secretary of state may have its political uses. But when everyone around him—especially the president himself—stands two feet tall, the effect may not be the one George W. intended.

If Powell were as skilled at deterring America's adversaries as he is at cowing his bureaucratic ones, his outsized stature might prove an asset. But that's not the case. Cheney, Rice, and the rest of the Bush team know Powell's flaws. They know, too, that he was appointed despite, rather than because of, his strategic judgment. Powell's selection was fundamentally about American politics, not international politics. And that's a big problem. Because, as the Bushies will soon be reminded, not only does Powell not play by their rules, the world doesn't play by his. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Time Out

CURIOUS, HOW THE castaway theme persists through the ages. Recurrently, authors are drawn to the story of long absence from accustomed life, on a desert island or elsewhere, and the trauma of return. Shakespeare was not immune: *The Tempest* is probably not the first of the lot, though it is inevitably the best. *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, Tennyson's poem *Enoch Arden*, Tolstoy's play *Redemption*, Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton*, C.S. Forester's *Single-Handed*, the McCarey-Spewack film *My Favorite Wife*—that's only a quick skim of the castaway works. And now there is another.

But **Cast Away** (20th Century Fox), written by William Broyles Jr. and directed by Robert Zemeckis, is a puzzler. The point of it is fuzzy. Most of the pieces cited above have used the castaway theme for some issue, as reversal of the workaday or luxurious world with the island as forge of the protagonist's soul. Also, there is the discomfort that the person's return causes those who thought him dead—a comment on the durability of love. *Cast Away* dabs at these themes but doesn't really develop any of them. We are left with little more than a two-hour trip through the film's not-so-novel plot mechanics.

Chuck Noland is a FedEx employee, a supervisor and efficiency expert whose lifework is speed and more speed. This is a somewhat too patent contrast with the fate that lies ahead of him, and so is almost everything else that is laid in during the first thirty minutes, including his romance with Kelly Frears. After Chuck is well-established in his contemporary life-and-work pattern, the story sends him on a FedEx mission to the South Pacific. The plane crashes into the sea. Chuck makes it to a small, deserted island, alone. All that he has there is what floats ashore, a few assorted FedEx boxes and, in time, another FedEx box containing a pair of ice skates. The ice-skate blades, converted to axes, are chief aids to his survival.

Four years later he manages to construct a raft that takes him out beyond the breakers to the open sea. Just when he is almost physically finished, he is picked up by a ship. When he gets home, he finds that Kelly is a wife and mother. It is much too plain from the "return" section of the story that Broyles and Zemeckis didn't know how to end it, so they included, in effect, several endings. (Choose one.) This only underscores our belief that they had no point in mind from the beginning. The finish is meant to be wryly ambiguous but is only inchoate. The desert-island idea, so rewardingly used in the past, has here been wasted.

Two possible themes, one minor and one immense, are left lying about. The minor one begins with Chuck, in Moscow at the start to sort out Russian FedEx's inefficiency, phoning Kelly and complaining of a toothache. Back home, he doesn't have time to visit his dentist before he is off on another jaunt, so he takes the toothache with him to the island. There, in a brutal (and incredible) way he rids himself of the ache. It is never again mentioned: there is only one small oblique joke about it near the end, not much of a payoff for all the preparation.

The major theme begins with a white volleyball in one of the FedEx packages that wash ashore with Chuck. He cuts his hand one day and, furious, picks up the ball and throws it a distance. Later, calmer, he picks up the ball again and sees that it now has a large blood stain on it. Humorously, he draws eyes and a nose and a mouth in the stain. Then he sets the ball on a rock, and that face becomes his companion—more, a kind of totem on which he depends for reassurance. He takes the ball with him on the escape raft; when it is washed overboard, he dives right after it and almost drowns in his (failed) attempt to retrieve it. After his rescue, absolutely nothing more is said about this formerly important juju. He forgets it completely.

Suppose he had been shown at the start as something more than the flavorless organization man that he is, a man with views—of whatever kind—on spiritual matters. Suppose, then, that the conditions of his exile forced him, consciously and bitterly, to deal with the need for a companion and confidant, a need filled by that ridiculous volleyball totem, which has become highly important to him. Then suppose that, home and safe again, he was either influenced by the volleyball experience or had deliberately rid himself of anything like that dependency. Then the film would at least have had some reason for being, which now it has not.

All the picture exists for is to provide a huge role for Tom Hanks, allowing him to do things he has never done before. I couldn't understand why his Chuck was not more frightened during the crash sequence in the plane and why he seems to accept his arrival on the island as merely one more chapter in his life. All he brings to Chuck's four years on the island are the usual Hanks affability and dailyness. And, except for hair and beard, he is pretty much the same man at the end of those four years that he was at the start—something that is not true of past castaway stories.

Helen Hunt has the pitiable role of Kelly. This character, who is off-screen for most of the picture, seems a crude manufacture when she is on. Robert Zemeckis directed with little of the cleverness that he brought to *Back to the Future* and *Forrest Gump*.

Poor films are never in short supply, even from well-known figures, but occasionally such a figure presents a picture so dreadful that the viewer has to wonder about the mental stability of that figure—along with the sanity of everyone else involved. *Ishtar*, the Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty item written and directed by Elaine May, is the giant clinker usually hauled out as a measuring stick of mental lapse. Now comes a picture that is easily up, or down, to the *Ishtar* level. **An Everlasting Piece** (DreamWorks) was made by Barry Levinson, who did *Diner*, *Rain Man*, and *Wag the Dog*. Whatever one's opinion of those films, they do not lead one to expect the sheer stupidity from Levinson that we get here.

The setting of this screenplay by Barry McEvoy is Belfast; the film was shot in Ireland with Irish actors. The time is the early 1980s, when the Northern Ireland troubles were boiling. Two youngish barbers, one Catholic and the other Protestant, decide to go into the wig business, selling hair pieces to men on either side of the conflict. The moment that we understand the attempted joke in the title, a sort of paralysis sets in for us—quite welcome, in fact.

I cite only two moments in the picture. One night, when the two barbers are driving along, they are stopped by an IRA

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patrol armed with submachine guns. Scary. The scene goes on to reveal that the patrol commander is bald; so the two barbers persuade him to buy a wig and let them go. Later, that same commander wants to buy thirty wigs from them for bald members of the IRA.

Comedies set in wartime are not rare. (The best play about the Irish troubles that I know is a black farce, *Flying Blind*, by Bill Morrison.) But the play or film needs some clear relevance, one way or another, to the grim setting—something more than bloodshed as a cute background for a laugh riot. *An Everlasting Piece* is too grotesquely misconceived even to be called tasteless. Come home, Barry Levinson. Recover. ■

Why Books Survive

By LARRY MCMURTRY

Book Business: Publishing Past Present and Future by Jason Epstein

(Norton, 188 pp., $21.95)

I.

THE WISDOMS, THE reflections, and the wild guesses assembled in this short, smart book were initially floated in a set of lectures that Jason Epstein delivered at the New York Public Library in the fall of 1999. They concern themselves, as the subtitle suggests, with the splendors and miseries of American trade book publishing, past, present, and future; the miseries have mainly to do with the somber economics of this humble trade. Part of Epstein's book is credo, part of it is history, and part of it is prophecy; the credo is passionate, the history is confident, and the prophecy is hesitant, though I suspect it was chiefly for the prophecy that Epstein was induced to speak.

Everyone concerned with literature wants to know what is going to happen to the homely old trade of book publishing in the Era of the Net, and who better to help us puzzle it out than Jason Epstein? In the 1950s he created Anchor Books, the first really successful highbrow paperback line. I can still remember, across some forty-five years, the thrill of spotting those first few volumes—*The Charterhouse of Parma, Studies in Classic American Literature, To the Finland Station*—in my college bookstore. Several of the covers in the early series were done by Edward Gorey, only recently deceased. Epstein did Anchor Books at Doubleday but soon left, to become a stalwart at Random House. He was one of the founders of *The New York Review of Books*, and for years acted, as he wryly puts it, as "Edmund Wilson's representative on earth" in the matter of the Library of America. He may be the sagest head we have when it comes to American publishing: too sage, clearly, to suppose that his own prophecies are likely to hold steady for much longer than it takes him to get the words out of his mouth.

Consider, for example, what happened in publishing and publishing-related areas of our national life in a single week: the last week of July 2000, when I first read this book in galleys. One of the first points Epstein makes is that brand name authors no longer need publishers; and more controversially he suggests that some publishing houses might have better balance sheets if they didn't have to pony up the immense sums paid to these brand names—$64 million, was it, to Mary Higgins Clark? I was just pondering those strictures when Stephen King—the brand namer's brand name—announced that he was flanking his nominal publisher, Simon and Schuster, and was issuing a serial called *The Plant* directly onto the Web; readers were to pay him through a kind of honor system. Simon and Schuster, caught flat-footed, adopted a rather unconvincing grin-and-bear-it mode: Oh-that-Stephen-what-a-wild-one-he-is-ha-ha.

What first interested me, as a dealer in secondhand books, was not that Stephen King had gone directly to the Web, but that he was attempting to revive the part-issue, the form in which *The Pickwick Papers*, most of the rest of Dickens, and much Victorian fiction was first issued. Before I could really think through this ghostly return of the part-issue, however, a Federal judge suddenly pulled the plug on Napster, the popular music swap service, an act of judicial sobriety that immediately threw our vast youth militia into wild revolt. The youth were outraged that acts as cool as Metallica would be so uncool as to hope to be paid for their work. (The youth militia knows little of the grisly beginnings of even the most famous bands—the Beatles in Hamburg, for example.)

Napster claims 22.5 million users, Amazon.com 22.5 million customers. Is this now the Web benchmark? In Amazon's case, all those customers are not quite enough to blunt Wall Street's concerns about that Old Economy bugaboo, profits, the scarcity of which, according to Epstein, has rendered American publishing shaky all along.

TWO DAYS AFTER the first Napster ruling—I was still reading—an appeals court allowed Napster to continue operating, at least for the nonce; but by this time numerous so-called peer-to-peer services were revving up, in case Napster eventually goes down, or, more likely, strikes a deal with the recording industry. In just a few days, then, before I had fully digested one short book, a really big genie came roaring out of the bottle: the notion that music, like butterflies, should be free. And if music should be free why not literature, man?

Then, just as the dust from all this began to settle, Epstein's old firm, Random House, announced that it was a establishing an entirely digital imprint, to be called AtRandom (the title, appropriately, of their onetime owner Cerf's memoir). Various other publishers, bumbling along behind like a litter of puppies whose eyes are not yet quite open, announced that they too would have digital imprints, pretty soon. This development would likely have been undreamt of by Epstein's old bosses, Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer, but it was not undreamed of by his sometime author Norbert Weiner, the MIT cybervisionary, whom Epstein published but did not, he ruefully admits, take quite seriously. What seemed like science fiction only a few decades ago had become sober—well, perhaps not quite sober—reality now.

LARRY MCMURTRY is the author, most recently, of *Boone's Lick* (Simon & Schuster).

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All this happened in a week's time, and I doubt that Epstein or anyone else can really make sense of it. A basic mistake might to be to assume that there *is* sense in it; in fact it may mostly be random acts—no pun intended—by bewildered executives hoping that by submission to the gods of the Net they might somehow catch a wave and surf into the profit columns. They should take a look at James Gleick's *Faster*, a sharp reminder that in our culture speed is now more important than direction; and speed is much more likely to come from youngsters such as those who started Yahoo! or Napster—or, for that matter, Apple and Microsoft—than from the publishing offices in New York. Those who have the leisure to wonder if they are behind *are* behind. (In the cases of Napster and King, dénouements came with Gleick-like speed: Napster, that darting virgin, slid with hardly a sigh of reluctance into the sweaty embrace of Bertelsmann, and Stephen King's Web part-issue failed because not enough clickers sent their dollars. What's the Web all about, dude, if it's not about Free?)

II.

EPSTEIN MAKES HIS basic point about book publishing in America immediately, in the first paragraph of *Book Business*:

> Trade book publishing is by nature a cottage industry, decentralized, improvisational, personal; best performed by small groups of like-minded people, devoted to their craft, jealous of their autonomy, sensitive to the needs of writers and to the diverse interests of readers. If money were their primary goal, these people would probably have chosen other careers. They might, for example, have become literary agents, many of whom have prospered as authors' royalty guarantees have risen sharply in today's highly competitive market for salable talent. But most editors and publishers I have known prefer to think of themselves as I do, as devotees of a craft whose reward is the work itself and not its cash value.

Implicit through the whole book—this is the credo part—is the belief that close and persistent contact with literature, or even with the attempt to make it, is a good in itself, an uplifting thing. The Random House author William Faulkner, in his famous Nobel Prize address, made the same point. Though they were of course not likely to turn down dollars, some such belief—rather than severe MBA-style business principles—animated many of the men who built distinguished publishing houses in America, from Alfred Knopf and Horace Liveright in the 1920s to Barney Rosset in the 1960s. Random House, where Epstein settled, was both mainstream and modernist; they fought and won the *Ulysses* fight, published Auden and Faulkner, but also had an excellent children's book line headed by Dr. Seuss himself, and a solid list of dictionaries as well.

Among the most affecting parts of Epstein's book are his warm tributes to his old bosses Cerf and Klopfer, businessmen so kind-hearted that when forced to fire an editor they softened the blow by lending the man the money to buy a house. Numerous literary lights meander through the story: Auden coming in carpet slippers to deliver a manuscript, Faulkner waiting for the subway, Edmund Wilson arriving at the Princeton Club to talk with Mr. Epstein about the Library of America: the great man marched to the bar and promptly ordered six martinis, which the well-trained bartender, as Epstein recalled, arranged "in a kind of phalanx." Epstein, assuming that at least one or two of the martinis must be for him, ordered nothing. None of the martinis were for him.

HAVING SAID RIGHT OFF that trade book publishing is not—in cash terms—a very good business, Epstein then has to hurry along and explain how he and his colleagues survived in it all these years—fifty years, in his case. Survival and profitability, he insists, depends not on best-sellers but on the vigorous maintenance and management of a firm's backlist—that is, books already published and still in print. Solid, well-managed backlists keep good publishers afloat; they just don't yield the kind of profits that excite corporate hard-chargers.

Exciting or not, by the mid-1990s virtually all well-established American publishers had been sucked like plankton into the maw of various corporate whales: Bertlesmann took the Random House group, Holtzbrinck took Farrar Straus & Giroux and St. Martin's, Rupert Murdoch took HarperCollins and Morrow, Viacom took Simon and Schuster, and so on. Epstein notes that in the homely offices where he began his work at Random House it was not uncommon, when he got to work, to discover that one of his writers had slipped in and spent the night on the couch, "not always alone." Publisher's offices now are likely to resemble the power towers of successful insurance companies; any author foolish enough to try and slip into one at night would be immediately nabbed by the security forces. Today most editors labor at the blessing of remote managers who have little interest in literature and no fondness for the publishing culture itself, such as it has been and, in pockets here and there, still is.

This upsizing has been going on since the 1960s, but in inconsistent ways. When Random House bought Knopf in 1960, it was in some sense a peer-to-peer transaction, Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer acquiring the great backlist of Alfred and Blanche Knopf. But, a decade on, when Gulf and Western bought Simon and Schuster, there was nothing peer-to-peer about it: a tycoon bought a modest publishing company. That pattern, not the peer-to-peer pattern, has prevailed ever since, to the sorrow of Epstein and many others.

There is nothing they can do about it, though. Big fish can swallow little fish if they want to, though frequently the little fish prove too bony and are spat out, as Random House has been a couple of times. Lately, however, the world *was* startled when a brand new species of fish, America Online, swallowed Time Warner: it was rather like a watching an ambitious garter snake swallow a donkey. What does the garter snake think it's going to do with that donkey in its belly?

IF THERE IS any consolation for the sadness of seeing decent American publishing houses sucked into vast and impersonal multinational businesses, it is that the process is not irreversible. The major media gluttons of the present day—Turner, Levin, Eisner, Murdoch, Redstone—are none of them spring chickens; the spring-chicken billionaires are all in computers. Though it is true that the greedy usually live longer than the meek, a die-off will begin one day. In a few years it will be a different world, one that, as Epstein himself suggests, may be a little more encouraging to cottage industries. It is this world that Epstein cautiously (and not wholly convincingly) looks forward to in his closing remarks:

> . . . Human beings have a genius for finding their way, for making orderly markets, distinguishing quality and assigning value. This faculty can be taken for granted. There is no reason to fear that the awesome diversity of the World Wide Web will overwhelm it. In fact, the Web's diversity will enlarge these powers, or so one's experience of humankind permits one to think.
>
> Whether publishers adapt to this opportunity with foresight or let it fall upon them as it will is unclear. What is clear is that on the World Wide Web, publishers' tasks can be reduced to an essential handful: editorial support, publicity, design, production, and

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financing. For these functions size confers no advantage and at a certain magnitude becomes a nuisance. My guess is that future publishing units will be small, though they may be related to a central financial source. To the extent that writers deliver the contents of their minds directly to the minds of their readers over the Web, as Stephen King has done, such traditional publishing work as marketing, sales, shipping, and warehousing together with their bureaucracies and inefficiencies can be minimized and assigned to specialist firms. Book publishing may therefore become once more a cottage industry of diverse, creative autonomous units, or so there is now reason to believe.

Epstein, remember, was making a speech at the New York Public Library; it would have been ungracious of him to come down like Nietzsche and cry disgrace. Even so, he takes leave us of with a kind of vaguely affirmative, dying-fall optimism that doesn't lock comfortably onto the mainly tough-minded book that he has written. His analysis of the growth of chain-bookselling in the 1970s and 1980s, and the consequent near-extinction of independent booksellers in America is acute, concise, and thorough. He knows quite well what the chains are, and also what they are not. What they are not is the great Eighth Street Bookstore of his youth and his dreams—and my dreams, too: it was the first place I went on my first visit to New York. Barnes and Noble and Borders are to bookselling as Martha Stewart is to decorating: a lot better than nothing but a lot less interesting than the few remaining great independent bookstores, such as Powells in Portland, Oregon, or The Tattered Cover in Denver—stores that are not so much local institutions as regional ones.

Epstein's last fading clauses—"...or so one's experience of humankind permits one to think."... "or so there is now reason to believe"—make one wonder how firmly convinced he really is of his own hopeful prophecies about the Web. Human beings may have a genius, as he suggests, for orderly markets; but, as his own book fondly points out, the portion of humanity that chooses to be book publishers has not been particularly good in the orderly-market department. What the best of them, including Epstein, have been good at is the fundamentally disorderly and not always profitable work of allowing, encouraging, and assisting writers in their slow, uneven attempts to make literature. This is a high vocation, requiring passion, patience, and persistence. As for the markets, sometimes there is order in them and sometimes there isn't.

III.

THEN THERE IS the Web, source of wonder to millions. I recall being on a panel about the future of bookselling almost exactly ten years ago, in New York—I think of the evening now as the Night of the Marketers. Previous to that time I had never met a marketer, or heard one speak. Epstein was present that evening, if not exactly accounted for: he spent much of the evening discreetly enveloped in the folds of *The New York Observer*. His author Norman Mailer was on the panel, which was moderated by Richard Snyder, then the supremo of Simon and Schuster.

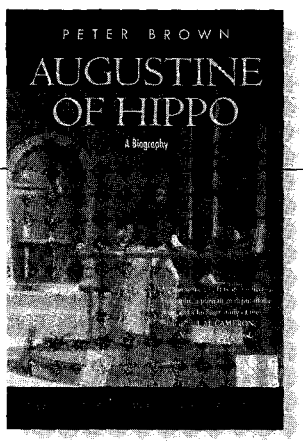
The marketers, it soon appeared, were eager to talk, and what they wanted to talk about was how computers were at last going to bring order to the markets. Mailer eventually grew irritated by these hosannas to the computer. He remarked tartly that he had already heard the word "computer" used sixty times, whereas the word "literature" hadn't been uttered even once. The marketers ignored him. This was supposed be a panel about selling books—why was this old grouch talking about literature? A book was a book, and their computers were going to tell them exactly how many copies of the next Tom Clancy they should ship to the Twin Cities. What more could anyone want?

This panel, held only ten years ago, was pre-Web, pre-Amazon.com, pre-e-book. Norman Mailer's question, unanswered that night, is still unanswered: never mind about computers, what about literature? Epstein's lectures attempt a belated answer. He tries to set the barely-tapped potentialities of the Web in the context of publishing history and methodology, as they have existed, more or less, since 1455, when Gutenberg printed his 42-line Bible. But what if the Web and its potentialities are, in George Trow's phrase, a-context-of-no-context? What this means for literature continues to be anybody's guess.

In the course of forty years as a published author I have worked with five book editors: John Leggett, Bill Decker, E.L. Doctorow, Michael Korda, and James Atlas. All five have published novels of their own; two were also biographers, one a critic, one a memoirist. All were, variously, literary men. I have never worked outside a publishing culture that was not first of all a literary culture much like the ones described by Epstein at the beginning of his book.

I doubt I'd be that lucky if I were starting out today. All the upsizing that has gone on in American publishing has, not surprisingly, brought with it a shift in power, from the editorial offices to the eyries of the marketers. There may still be editors who write, but the publishing culture as a whole is now a culture where marketers rule; it may even be that they will rule more ruthlessly once they employ the full weight of the Web. If I were speaking about the state of book publishing at the New York Public Library, I *would* come down like Nietzsche and cry disgrace. In the eyries the question about literature really is irrelevant—but it is not irrelevant to readers, who crave literature as much as ever, and are increasingly poorly served by the marketing culture that controls many publishing houses now. A marketing culture doesn't need the surprise of literature and doesn't want it. It wants products—the simpler and the less ambiguous, the better.

The newly bifurcated *New York Times* bestseller list is a case in point. All of a sudden, thanks to a young woman named J.K. Rowling, the Products—King, Clancy, Crichton, Koontz, Grisham, Steel, and the rest—were in danger of being walled off from the top slots on the best-seller list, upon which their publishers' vast investments depend. (The $64 million to Mary Higgins Clark is just a drop in the bucket.) *The New York Times* was not slow to respond to the crisis with a little wizardry of its own: it established a children's book bestseller list, so that now the Harry Pot-



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ters present and to come can compete seriously only with one another.

While it is obvious that the publishing industry cannot allow a mere writer to block the flow of the Products toward the top of the list, there are some rather powerful ironies involved here, one being that the Products, the heirs of Henty, Doyle, Buchan, Gaston Leroux, Perry Mason, Kathleen Winsor, and Elinor Glyn, are in the main only writing Big Kid books themselves.

IV.

THOUGH PESSIMISTIC ABOUT publishing, I remain bullish on bookselling. My favorite passage in Epstein's book is this one:

> [A] civilization without retail bookstores is unimaginable. Like shrines and other sacred meeting places, bookstores are essential artifacts of human nature. The feel of a book taken from the shelf and held in the hand is a magical experience, linking writer to reader.

Right on! The conviction that not only will people always want books, and will want them as they have always had them—on the shelves in bookstores—and will travel great distances to get to them, has led me to put upward of 300,000 books in four buildings in my hometown in West Texas. The annual bookfair in Frankfurt kicked off only a few years after Gutenberg first began publishing; the book-starved laity has been trudging off to unlikely places to find books ever since. Frankfurt, it is true, may be a little less unlikely than Archer City, but buildings are a lot cheaper here; it has mainly been the drastic rise in big-city real estate values that has discouraged large scale urban secondhand bookselling over the last half-century, with store after great store falling to the auctioneers.

When our customers finally make their way to Archer City—and thousands do—they usually chide us for not having our stock on the Internet. Then they spend the rest of the day complaining about the books that they do buy on the Internet: too many amateurs selling books, people who wouldn't know a half-title from a half-Nelson, and so on. We don't argue the point, but the fact is the antiquarian book trade has never been able to muster more than a few dozen arch-professionals at any one time; all the rest are amateurs to one degree or another. It is mainly amateurs who have the leisure to poke in the thousands of book-middens of the world, pouncing on rarities that, soon enough, trickle up to the shelves of the arch-professionals.

I don't use the term book-midden casually. There are aspects of book-buying that reach far back toward the evolutionary dawn—any bookseller will have observed them many times. We have our 300,000 books more or less intelligibly arranged. Many sections are even alphabetized, though I myself am a disciple of the English master Dusty Miller, whose shelving philosophy was purity itself: if he bought a short, fat book he looked along his shelves for a short, fat hole.

But suppose I come rushing in from a garage sale with forty or fifty books in my arms, the phone rings, and I dump the books on the floor. I have created a midden; and before I can get off the phone all the customers in the store will be squatting around it. The midden absorbs them entirely; the 300,000 books on the shelves may as well be wallpaper. The customers have receded deep into a hunter-gatherer mode. Almost always they find something in the midden, usually the very book they had been looking for. They buy it, glance vaguely at the shelves, and leave.

Epstein figures that pretty soon Web technology will allow for the immediate downloading of any text into an e-book of sorts, and so nothing written will be beyond access. Fine, but I wouldn't bet my bookshops on the success of the e-book, not yet. Simon and Schuster need not worry overly about that wild fellow King, either. He may be having a little fun with the Web, but I would bet that soon enough he will want the prestige of *the book* again. Those who suppose that the potency of the book can be diminished by the Web may find that they have made a very bad bet. The book is the perfect thing of its kind—affordable, portable, lendable, reusable, able to magically move literature from writer to reader and from reader to reader, just as Epstein says.

Of course, the fact that the Web will be able to access any text is an important thing; but it is well to remember that a text is not a book, and readers are mighty picky. They don't just want texts, they want their texts put into pleasing formats that look right, feel right, smell right. They want tactile pleasure as well as intellectual pleasure. Always, they discriminate. The test for e-books is how attractive they can be made; shoddy clumps of paper, such as are commonly found in Taiwanese piracies, won't cut it. No one wants to read Taiwanese piracies, but many people, as it happens, still want to read Anchor Books, so well selected, so appealing, so well-made. We try to keep a respectable shelf of Anchors, but it is nearly impossible: Gorey collectors grab them for the covers, and readers buy them just because they like their sturdy looks. Time—a half-century of it—has not touched them, and that, I assume, is, after all, the aim of good publishing. Jason Epstein should take heart from it. Perhaps he could even wander over to the Princeton Club and imbibe a couple of those martinis that Edmund Wilson didn't buy him. ■

Autumn of the Agitator

By ALAN BRINKLEY

W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963, Volume Two by David Levering Lewis

(Henry Holt, 715 pp., $35)

W. E. B. DU BOIS was one of the most important American scholars and one of the most influential intellectuals of the twentieth century, and he has been ably served by David Levering Lewis's now complete biography. In his first volume, published in 1996, Lewis traced Du Bois's life from his childhood and youth in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, through his successful career as a student, during which he became the first African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard; his first years of teaching and writing, during which he published such landmark works as *The Philadelphia Negro*; and his emergence as the preeminent spokesman in America for racial equality, as a founder of the NAACP and as

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editor of its influential magazine *The Crisis*. Had Du Bois done nothing besides publish his remarkable works of history, sociology, and moral commentary, he would still be a titanic figure in our national memory; but he did a great deal more than that. Many of his greatest published works were, in fact, a product of his temporary frustrations with, and departures from, the world that almost always most attracted him: the world of politics and organization and action.

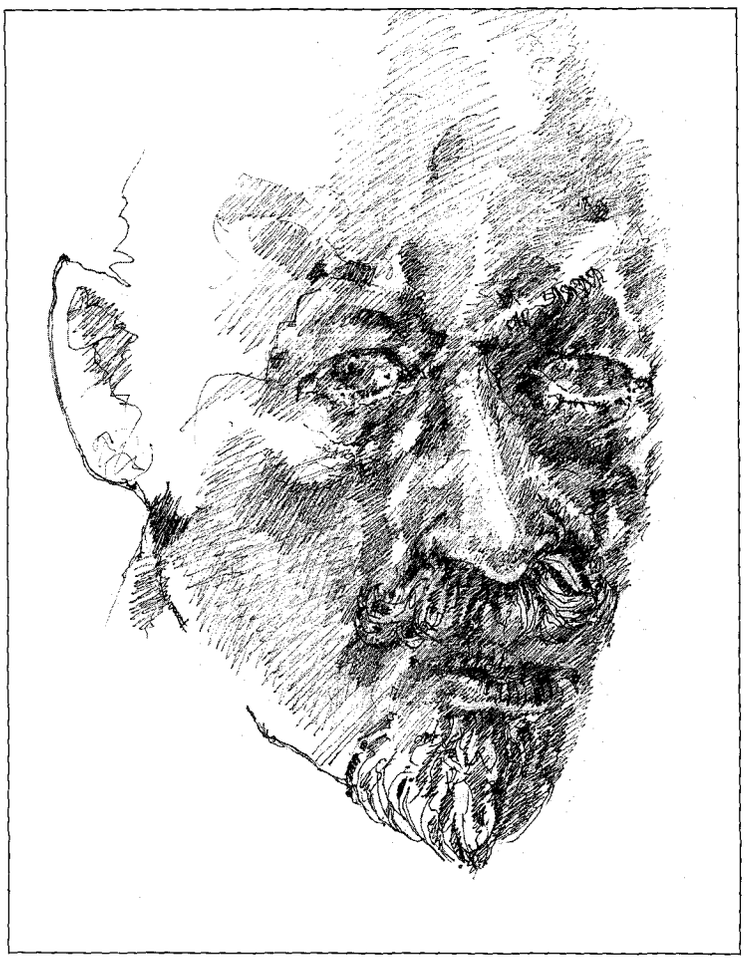
Du Bois owed his early political prominence to a celebrated feud with Booker T. Washington. From his perch as president of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Washington had been the principal spokesman, indeed the virtually undisputed spokesman, for black America in its relations with the white world for nearly twenty years. He had been born into slavery and had lived much of his life in the Jim Crow South, and perhaps as a result he was a cautious, accommodating man who advised black Americans to concentrate on self- improvement and to reject, or at least to postpone, challenges to the legal system of segregation and disenfranchisement that the white South (and parts of the white North) had erected to confirm their inferiority.

But Du Bois—the product of a small Massachusetts town in which, he claimed, he was not even aware of racial difference through most of his youth—offered an alternative approach to white supremacy: oppose it and discredit it, unrelentingly and fiercely. If Washington's autobiography *Up from Slavery*, which appeared in 1901, was to a large degree an African American version of the classic nineteenth-century rags-to-riches stories, Du Bois's brilliant collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*, which was published two years later, reflected the twentieth-century sensibility that oppression and injustice are the results of social and political structures, not individual failure. Du Bois offered a vision of a people using its intellectual elite (what he liked to call the "Talented Tenth") to do battle against racism and oppression and to break down the color line that he correctly identified as "the problem of the twentieth century." It soon became clear that it was Du Bois, not Washington, who best expressed the aspirations of most African Americans in the new century; and for the first third of that century Du Bois was—as Washington had been before him—the most important leader of black America.

How well suited was Du Bois for this new mantle? He was undeniably brilliant, a gifted writer and orator, a man with almost manic energy and an inexhaustible appetite for work. He was also fervently and unwaveringly committed to fighting racism and winning equality and dignity for black people in America and around the world. Unlike Washington, the master of compromise and accommodation, Du Bois was never willing to settle for less than complete victory; and over time his definition of victory grew increasingly expansive. For a people unaccustomed to hearing so frank a denunciation of white racism, Du Bois's thundering voice was a powerful inspiration.

But Du Bois had liablities as well, and over time they eroded—although never wholly destroyed—his ability to lead. The sense of commitment that so inspired many African Americans often took the form of rigidity in dealing with colleagues and collaborators. Du Bois was a poor politician within the increasingly fractious world of black leaders, and his unwillingness to compromise—on principle, on strategy, on budgets and office space and staff—won him many enemies and eventually helped marginalize him even within the NAACP, which he had helped to found in 1909. He was famously arrogant, often condescending and dismissive of those whom he considered his intellectual inferiors (that is, most people), and notoriously disloyal to those who worked with and for him.

Du Bois's personal life was far less successful than his public life, and at times it threatened him with embarrassment and even ruin. He largely ignored his long-suffering wife, Nina, and at times went months, even years, without seeing her. He was only intermittently involved in the troubled life of his only child, Yolande. He had frequent and not particularly well concealed extra-marital affairs. He was constantly on the edge of financial collapse, and yet he was seldom able to curb his considerable appetite for material comfort and display. Perhaps most of all, Du Bois's politics very early became considerably more radical than anything that the majority of the African American elite could accept.



W. E. B. Du Bois by David Schorr for The New Republic

He saw racism as an inextricable byproduct of capitalism, and he insisted that only through an assault on economic power could blacks hope to obtain real equality. He admired the social experiments of the early Soviet Union, which he visited in the 1920s and again in the 1930s; and although he never became a Stalinist, he retained for the rest of his life a commitment to Marxist analysis and, at times, a romantic attraction to Soviet communism. He was an early and consistent pan-Africanist who believed that the problems of black Americans were part of a worldwide problem of colonialism and racial oppression. "The absolute equality of races—physical, political, and social—is the founding stone of world peace and human advancement," he proclaimed; and he called for international action to address "the outrageously unjust distribution of world income among the dominant and the suppressed peoples." Such beliefs discomfited many American

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civil-rights leaders, black and white, who considered their struggle to be moral and legal, not economic, and uniquely American.

But while Du Bois's strategic aims were considerably more radical than those of most of his contemporaries, and while he was prone to recurring bouts of despair at the failure of America to make any significant steps toward his goals, he could nevertheless find considerable satisfaction in what—in his larger scheme—might have seemed small signs of progress. And he could fight effectively not just for ideological goals but also to protect his turf, even against challengers whose goals might seem compatible with his own. Some of the most effective sections of Lewis's book are his accounts of Du Bois's relationships with Marcus Garvey and the Harlem Renaissance.

Garvey, the Jamaican immigrant whose United Negro Improvement Association inspired thousands of African Americans in New York and elsewhere in the early 1920s, shared Du Bois's belief in the unity of black people globally, and proposed various plans for black economic empowerment that Du Bois later admitted were appealing. Like Du Bois, he believed that the racial divide rested at least in part on economic interests. There was a racial problem in America, Garvey said, "not because there is a difference between us in religion or in color, but because there is a difference between us in power."

But Garvey was anathema to most of the Northern black elite, because he seemed crude, demagogic, and outlandish; because he was achieving astonishing popularity among the masses of poor, urban blacks to whom Du Bois and the NAACP seemed largely irrelevant; and because his shoddy finances (which later caused him serious legal problems and eventual deportation) threatened to discredit the whole project of self-empowerment. Du Bois was troubled, too, by Garvey's occasional anti-Semitism. But the real battle between them, Lewis argues, was over "the national origins and social class of those aiming for a near monopoly of the black people in the United States: whether that class would continue to be recruited from the homegrown bourgeoisie (the Talented Tenth) generally loyal to aristocratic Du Bois, or whether it was to be supplanted by parvenu West Indians marching behind charismatic Garvey."

Unsurprisingly, Du Bois was much happier with the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of black literary and artistic life among black elites in New York (and other cities) during the same years that Garveyism was arousing the black masses. As editor of *The Crisis*, he published the work of many of the most talented black writers and poets and championed the art and music that they were creating. He was elated when his daughter married the Harlem poet Countee Cullen; and he staged a lavish, indeed an extravagant, wedding for them (only to discover within months that Cullen was gay and the marriage a sham).

"How is it that an organization like this," Du Bois wrote in *The Crisis* in 1926, about the NAACP's interest in the Harlem Renaissance, "a group of radicals trying to bring new things into the world, a fighting organization of this kind can turn aside to talk about art?" Surely black Americans had a right to a culture of their own, to a literature that spoke to their experiences and to an art that interpreted their world. But black artistic life, as welcome as it was, could not be a substitute for politics. "One comforting thing is occurring to both black and white," he warned. They were beginning to believe that 'Here is a way out. Here is the real solution to the color problem.' Whites, in particular, were championing the Renaissance because they "think it is going to stop agitation of the Negro question."

As much as he admired the products of the young black writers and artists of the 1920s, Du Bois was uneasy with what he considered its inadequate connection to the larger politics of the struggle. To demonstrate the direction in which he thought African American literary life should move, he published a novel of his own in 1927—*Dark Princess: A Romance*, a ponderous, propagandistic book that nevertheless gave voice to Du Bois's rock-hard conviction that real wisdom lay not in the triumphant industrial civilization of white Euro-America, but in the larger truths that could be found in the older, darker civilizations of Asia (much of his novel was set in India) and Africa.

Du Bois was sixty-one as the Great Depression began, an age that in the 1930s usually meant movement toward retirement—as he himself ruefully conceded at times. For the most part, though, he simply ignored his age—not just in the 1930s, but until just before his death in 1963—and reduced his punishing schedule of work hardly at all. The obstacles that he faced in the 1930s did not come from his age, but from his times. *The Crisis*, which had enjoyed a healthy circulation and reasonable financial stability in the 1920s, lost readers and advertising rapidly, and it survived only on the increasingly skimpy subsidies that the NAACP and other well wishers (themselves in straitened circumstances because of the Depression) doled out to it.

The NAACP itself, moreover, was no longer under Du Bois's effective control. Its director, the ambitious and talented Walter White, gradually came to see Du Bois less as a mentor and more as a rival; and a bitter enmity grew up between them that Du Bois, at least, harbored until his death. For a time he managed to hold on, increasingly precariously, to his magazine and to his eminence within the organization—and while doing so he interpreted the Great Depression to his readers as evidence of the essential bankruptcy of the capitalist system. The crisis, he said, revealed "the fantastic industrial structure of America ... threatened with ruin," its workers "double-tongued and helpless," and white workers so manipulated by capitalists to fear "Negro competition" that they were powerless to "attempt united action." Even so, he was tepidly supportive of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal,

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A sapphire ring is fingerless.

The weed and algae are floating like a bed,
and the bloodless gulls—

whose breaths would stink of all of us
if we could kiss them on the beaks—

are gnawing on the dead.

Peter Balakian

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decrying their reluctance to attack racism directly but applauding their success in making jobs and benefits available to black recipients.

The tensions between Du Bois and the NAACP came to a head early in 1934, when he published an inflammatory editorial in *The Crisis* in which he said that segregation could under some circumstances be positive. "The thinking colored people of the United States," he wrote, "must stop being stampeded by the word segregation. . . . there should never be an opposition to segregation pure and simple unless that segregation does involve discrimination." Some forms of segregation could help "colored people to work with each other, to cooperate with each other, to live with each other." This essay followed a series of earlier, impolitic editorials in which he had shown an increasing sympathy for black nationalism. The integrationist board and leadership of the organization—not to mention thousands of *Crisis* readers—were startled and appalled. The controversy over the editorial grew so bitter that in June 1934 Du Bois finally resigned from the organization that he had helped found and accepted a professorship at Atlanta University, which he had left in 1910.

DU BOIS'S RETURN to Atlanta helped make possible one of the most important works of his life, indeed one of the most important scholarly studies of the twentieth century—his landmark study, *Black Reconstruction*, published in 1935. One of the best sections of this consistently fine biography is Lewis's perceptive account of the state of Reconstruction historiography at the time—a historiography more serious than, but not substantively different from, the image portrayed in D.W. Griffith's great and notorious *Birth of a Nation* and, more gently, in *Gone with the Wind.* Du Bois challenged the prevailing view of Reconstruction in several ways. He argued that Reconstruction was not a terrible act of oppression inflicted vindictively on the prostrate former Confederacy, but an admirable, if largely failed, effort to create democracy in the South and justice for emancipated slaves; and he demonstrated that the black men and women of the Reconstruction South were not the bewildered, childlike figures that the prevailing accounts portrayed, but in many cases powerful and committed agents of change. Reconstruction, in other words, was not purely a project of whites; African Americans played a vital role in its creation and its execution.

The immediate response to *Black Reconstruction* was decidedly mixed, in part because it was so startlingly at odds with prevailing assumptions. But it was also controversial because Du Bois's analysis was built on a Marxist framework and attempted to portray the struggles of southern blacks as part of a worldwide effort by workers to liberate themselves from the shackles of capitalism. This alienated some critics who might otherwise have been sympathetic to the book's other claims, and it gave a glimpse into Du Bois's increasingly doctrinaire future. Still, the book provoked the reinterpretation of Reconstruction that has extended into our own time, and it served as the starting point for the powerful work of, among many others, John Hope Franklin, Kenneth Stampp, and Eric Foner.

Shortly after completing *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois, an inveterate and remarkably successful seeker of grants, secured funding for a trip around the world in 1936 that took him to Nazi Germany for the first time (where he expressed admiration for some of Hitler's achievements but described Nazi anti-Semitism as "surpass[ing] in vindictive cruelty and public insult" anything he had ever seen); to the Soviet Union for the second time (his earlier admiration remained undimmed, as he made clear when he wrote "Russia declares that the majority of mankind can become efficient members of a culture state," something that capitalist societies could never do); and to China and Japan. In Asia, as elsewhere, Du Bois's increasingly schematic analysis of the world led him to conclusions that would later embarrass him.

Just as he at times minimized the dangers of fascism and exaggerated the promise of communism by considering them in the context of his critique of global capitalism, so he interpreted the war then in progress between China and Japan as a contest between the declining capitalist world (of which China, through colonial exploitation, had become the Asian representative), and a bold, new Japan determined to defend Asia from the rapacity of the West. The source of Chinese-Japanese enmity, he concluded, was China's "submission to white aggression and Japan's resistance" to it. This was part of a pattern in Du Bois's mature years of consistent adherence to lofty goals and occasional blindness to particular evils that did not fit comfortably into his worldview. His curiously remote attitude to the Scottsboro case—which he denounced but never seemed to take as seriously as many of his colleagues and allies—was one of many other examples of this growing rigidity and dogmatism. He seems to have considered the case too trivial, and the Scottsboro "boys" themselves too unimportant, to merit much of his attention.

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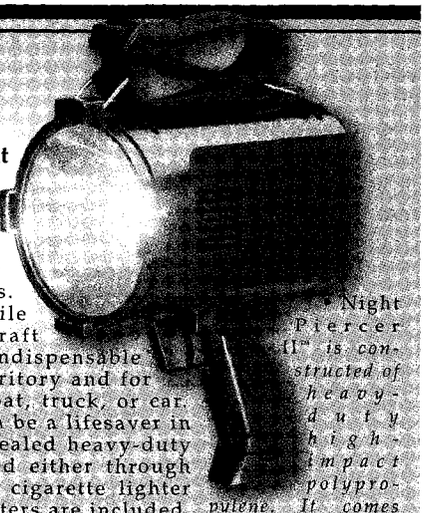

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World War II and its aftermath was an important turning point in American race relations, and in Du Bois's life. As the drive for racial equality spread more and more widely through black America, as it attracted increasing support from white liberals, as new organizations emerged dedicated to organizing active resistance to white supremacy, Du Bois's belief in intellectual struggle and reliance on talented elites became more and more marginal to the growing battle. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, as real progress toward civil rights was beginning to become visible for the first time, Du Bois—whether because of ideological rigidity or because of unhappiness at his own growing irrelevance—became increasingly embittered about the African American plight and even more dogmatically Marxist in his critique of it. Gradually, he became almost a pariah.

In 1940, Atlanta University declined to renew Du Bois's professorship, arguing that at age 72 he was well past the age of mandatory retirement. He returned to New York to a new appointment at the NAACP; but the old bickering soon resumed, and in 1948 he left the organization again. Convinced that the Cold War was part of an imperialist (and racist) effort to impose a Pax Americana on the non-white world, Du Bois supported Henry Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948; opposed the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the Korean War; and eventually found himself labeled a subversive and stripped of his passport. His former allies in the mainstream civil-rights organizations did not often publicly denounce him, but they did keep their distance. "I would have been hailed with approval if I had died at fifty," Du Bois acknowledged in early 1943. "At seventy-five my death was practically requested."

Increasingly, he found himself allied with the far left—with communists and fellow travelers—in the cold political climate of the 1950s. When a Supreme Court decision restored his passport to him in 1958, he left the United States for a triumphant visit to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China, where he was treated as an honored guest and ally. In 1961, he formally joined the American Communist Party. "Today I have reached a firm conclusion," he wrote to the party chairman Gus Hall. "Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction." Almost simultaneously, as if to confirm his final alienation from his own nation, he left the United States for Ghana, where he became the revered ward of the leftist regime of Kwame Nkrumah. He died there in August 1963, on the eve of the great March on Washington that marked a culmination of many of Du Bois's early dreams but that now seemed to him a largely irrelevant gesture against a world incapable of granting equality to people of color without revolutionary change.

In the end, Lewis persuasively argues, Du Bois must be evaluated not as the erratic political activist that he sometimes was, nor as the embittered radical he became at the end of his life, nor as the prickly bureaucratic infighter who alienated so many of his one-time allies. He should be remembered, rather, as "an intellectual in the purest sense of the word—a thinker whose obligation was to be dissatisfied continually with his own thoughts and those of others." He was seldom fully in step with his time, and his congenital dissatisfaction with the world he knew led him at times into positions that now seem politically foolish and even morally abhorrent. But his great contribution to modern American history was to place before a hostile or uncomprehending nation a wrenching and uncompromising, if often flawed, criticism of its greatest injustices.

Other leaders played the valuable roles of organizing effective movements and waging successful legal battles against racism. Du Bois was the stern avatar of a sense of pure justice. He was never satisfied with the halting progress that he occasionally helped to produce. He was possessed, Lewis notes, "of a principled impatience with what he saw as the egregious failings of American democracy." That was why he sometimes found himself in sympathy with undemocratic systems (fascism, communism) that he believed—spectacularly wrongly—could offer quicker, simpler routes to democratic ends. But the greatness of Du Bois, as Lewis's extraordinary biography makes clear, transcends his many failings. It lies in his lifelong project, from which he only occasionally strayed, of using his formidable mind in the service of a simple democratic truth. ■

Life Without Eliot

By MARK FORD

Other Traditions: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures by John Ashbery

(Harvard University Press, 167 pp., $22.95)

"Most reckless things are beautiful in some way," John Ashbery remarked in a talk at Yale on the avant-garde in 1968, "and recklessness is what makes experimental art beautiful, just as religions are beautiful because of the strong possiblity that they are founded on nothing. We would all believe in God if we knew he existed, but would this be much fun?" Recklessness (and in some cases, fun) is the salient feature that connects the six little-known and disparate writers that Ashbery chose to discuss in his Charles Eliot Norton lectures, delivered at Harvard in 1990, and now polished up and published as *Other Traditions*.

This recklessness took many forms. In Laura Riding (1901–1991), it developed into an aggressive disdain for all other poets, and in the end drove her to repudiate her own poetic career. In Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849), it resulted in a vast, unfinished and unfinishable pseudo-Jacobean play called *Death's Jest-Book*, whose plot spins off in so many different directions it is all but impossible to follow. John Clare (1793–1864), David Schubert (1913–1946), and Raymond Roussel (1877–1933) were all compulsive writers who, in their different ways, failed or refused to acknowledge the socially sanctioned distinctions between life and art: Clare and Schubert ended up in asylums, as Roussel probably would have done too, had he not been rich enough to pursue his eccentric aesthetic vision on his own terms. And John Wheelwright (1897–1940), a Boston Brahmin and a Marxist who used to preach revolution to the masses while elegantly attired in a racoon-skin coat, seems to have been so funda-

MARK FORD's new book, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams*, has just been published by Cornell University Press. His second collection of poetry, *Soft Sift*, will be published by Faber & Faber next spring.

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mentally at odds with the ideology of his society that, for all his impassioned earnestness, he was dismissed by most of his contemporaries as an entertaining curiosity.

All these writers were—though I tremble at the thought of Laura Riding's shade observing me write this—considered by many to be failures, and for the most part they were ignored or derided for their excesses and eccentricities by the mainstream literary culture of their time. If all of Ashbery's subjects might be described as commencing their careers at an angle to the age in which each lived, in all cases that angle became progressively more acute; and so they went unpublished or unread, or were diagnosed as insane, or were driven to destroy or to renounce their own work. Ashbery's celebration of these writers is also a melancholy book.

Both Roussel and Beddoes eventually killed themselves. Beddoes—who had trained, like his father, as a doctor—opened an artery in his leg with a razor in June 1848, and although he did not bleed to death (as perhaps he had hoped), gangrene set in and the leg had to be amputated. He finally succeeded in commiting suicide by taking poison in Basel on January 26, 1849, when he was found with a sardonic letter to his friend Revell Phillips folded on his breast. "I am food for what I am good for—worms," he declared, then added ruefully in a postscript; "I ought to have been, among other things, a good poet; Life was too great a bore on one peg & that a bad one."

Roussel, on the other hand, had no doubts of his own literary genius, despite an unbroken series of humiliations; what he could not understand was how his contemporaries failed to share his own estimate of his work, which he felt was as great as that of Shakespeare or Dante. In "How I Wrote Certain of My Books," a short autobiographical text that he arranged to have published posthumously, he reflected bitterly on a life of continual literary rejection. "In bringing this essay to a close," he laments, "I must refer again to the pain I have suffered at seeing my works run up against an almost totally hostile incomprehension." Shortly after delivering this essay to his publishers, to whom he paid enormous sums throughout his life to issue his books, Roussel made his final will and left Paris for Palermo. One night, like Beddoes, he attacked himself with a razor: "How easy it is to die!" he is said to have remarked when found by the hotel valet, whom he had earlier attempted to bribe to kill him. Roussel finally succumbed to an overdose of barbiturates—to which he had been addicted for some years—on the night of July 13, 1933.

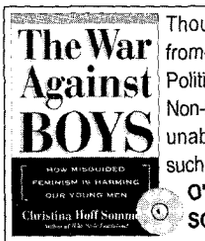
ASHBERY ORIGINALLY INTENDED to call his lecture series "The Other Tradition," which is also the title of a poem collected in *Houseboat Days*, which appeared in 1977. The poem explores, among other things, the antithetical nature of his relationship to the canons of Western literature. In his famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot argued that each new poem must somehow record and incorporate "all the poetry that has ever been written," rather as a new model of car must include improved versions of all the previous model's features; but Ashbery insouciantly celebrates the redemptive powers of forgetting. In his poem, it is precisely what is beyond the parameters of the "stockade" of the tradition, that liberates us:

> You found this
> Charming, but turned your face fully
> toward night,
> Speaking into it like a megaphone,
> not hearing
> Or caring, although these still live and
> are generous
> And all ways contained, allowed to
> come and go
> Indefinitely in and out of the stockade
> They have so much trouble remembering,
> when your forgetting
> Rescues them at last, as a star absorbs
> the night.

Ashbery began reading poetry at a time when Eliot's theories and practice were at their most influential, in the 1940s. Delmore Schwartz, one of Ashbery's favorite poets from this decade, delivered a lecture at Columbia University in 1947 called "The Literary Dictatorship of T.S. Eliot," in which he bravely attacked Eliot's criticism as "the expense of spirit in a waste of false discrimination." "Is it necessary," Schwartz asked, "in order to praise poets A, B, and C, to condemn poets D, E, F, G, H, and the rest of the alphabet?" Eliot's lofty condemnations, Schwartz argued, imposed a restrictive template on American poetry, with the result that much interesting work was ignored at the time, and has been overlooked since.

Ashbery holds the same view. "I continue to believe," he observed in 1983 in an article on David Schubert, "that there was a lot of very exciting poetry being written in the thirties and forties by poets who, like Schubert [and, one might add, Schwartz], have been forgotten since." The work of such poets as Schubert and Schwartz, John Wheelwright and Jean Garrigue and Paul Goodman, did not lend itself to the principles of the New Criticism institutionalized by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in their best-selling textbook *Understanding Poetry*, which was published in 1938. Their formula for the ideal poem—severe, formally intricate, ironic, somewhat bloodless—was based largely on Eliot's critical pronouncements. A quarter of a century later, in 1962, Ashbery complained in an essay on the French poet Pierre Reverdy that American poetry was still "languishing in the shadow of Eliot": the staple American poem tended to be grounded in allegory, to attempt a tone that was "dry and dignified," and to present a persona loosely modeled on J. Alfred Prufrock—a sensitive, hapless bourgeois overtaken by the events of history.

Ashbery was drawn instead to poets in the generation before his own who were struggling to escape what he called "the eternal dead weight of symbolism." Riding, Schubert, and Wheelwright each evolved idioms that—as Ashbery observes in his new book—"turned your face fully toward night," that is, forced the reader to acknowledge the incomprehensible and formless aspects of experience, as well as moments of seeming illumination or sig-



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nificance. Riding's dense abstractions, Wheelwright's odd mix of the vatic and the uncertain, Schubert's elliptical lyricism, all offered ways out of the strait-jacket of New Critical irony, which sought above all to control what it described. But Ashbery's poetry consistently attempts to reveal how "meaningfulness can't get along without randomness, and that they somehow have to be brought together," as he put it in an interview in 1972. In his analyses of his three American precursors, Ashbery is particularly alert to what is "askew" in their work, to the ways they throw the reader "off balance," to the "fertile short-circuiting" of expectations that their best poetry achieves.

In the conclusion to his essay on Riding, Ashbery cites Julian Symons, who—like most who had dealings with her—ended up feeling the lash of her tongue: Riding, he suggests, was "a sort of saint of poetry, and like all saints, tiresome; but what she did, by her work and her example, to purify poetic language, could have been done in no other way, and perhaps by no other kind of person. There are many who owe her a debt." This process of purification involved a rigorous quasi-philosophical investigation of the epistemological assumptions underlying our use of language. "What is it to ask?" she asks in "As Many Questions as Answers": "It is to find an answer./What is it to answer?/Is it to find a question?" Like Gertrude Stein, Riding endlessly conjugates particular syntactic units until language begins to seem to tremble on the verge of both revelation and absurdity at the same time.

The early Auden was one of the many who "owed" Riding a debt—indeed, in the 1930s he was charged by Riding and her husband, Robert Graves, with plagiarism. What appealed in her work to both Auden and Ashbery was its ability to develop a seemingly coherent argument within a largely indeterminate framework. Riding's tone of oracular authority allowed her to present abstract thoughts in urgent, dialectical terms. "And what is it to be born?/It is to choose the enemy self/To learn impossibility from." There is no arguing with that, any more than there is with Auden's "If beauty later/Bear any feature,/It had a lover/And is another," or with Ashbery's "He is sherrier/And sherriest./A tall thermometer/Reflects him best," which he quotes here as an example of her influence upon his work.

Unlike the poetry of Eliot, Pound, and Yeats, moreover, Riding's verse is all but bare of allusion. Her images tend to be generic, ways of illustrating an objectively presented argument, and reveal nothing of her responses to other writers or to history or to politics. Nor do we learn much, at least directly, of her feelings or her situation. In this sense, her work is far more impersonal than that of Eliot, who refers in the middle of *The Waste Land* to his spell in a clinic in Switzerland: "By the waters of Leman, I lay down and wept." (The line was delightfully parodied by Ashbery in 1962 in a poem called "The Suspended Life": "In the hay states of Pennsylvania and Arkansas/I lay down and slept.")

Riding offered Ashbery and Auden ways of evading the self-aggrandizing aspect of High Modernism—its tendency to figure the poet as a hero ironically commenting on the collapse of civilization, shoring fragments against impending ruin and so on. Riding's work excluded, on principle, the ephemeralities of contemporary culture, which led her near-contemporary Wheelwright to complain in 1932, in a review of two of her volumes, that she indulged in the obscurities of "automatic writing" for their own sake. In fact, Riding's poetry is as exactingly self-conscious as poetry can be—and it was Wheelwright himself who flirted with Surrealist techniques of plumbing the unconscious.

WHEELWRIGHT'S EARLY WORK "North Atlantic Passage"—which is half in poetry and half in prose—was composed while onboard ship; in a notebook he records how he gazed at the ocean for days on end, allowing phrases to form in his mind, until they seemed to be repeated so insistently by the ship's engines and the sounds of the sea that they became poetry. While Riding's austere linguistic equations escaped the "dead weight of symbolism" by being almost entirely self-referential, Wheelwright's work suggested an antithetical means of enabling poetry to present "living phenomena," to use a phrase from Ashbery's essay on Reverdy. Wheelwright's work is open to the point of distraction not only to "living phenomena," but to Wheelwright's own second, third, fourth, and fifth thoughts on what he is describing. The swirling collages that result are not always easy to decipher:

> Distinct, a dolphin splashes.
> Past a porpoise dashes.
> One orange, two bananas, orange-red.
> Unravel all mythology.
> Weave a new Theosophy.
> Truth lies in Correspondence, it is said.
> Siva signifies thereby
> Heinrich Heine's Lorelei
> Rhine salmon salted, spread on
> Boston bread.

Many of Wheelwright's longer poems come buttressed with an Argument, which often seems to bear only oblique relation to the work that follows; and some poems have footnotes too, in which Wheelwright points out some choice formal or thematic feature, or an allusion to the Scriptures, or philosophy, or politics. Far from clarifying things, these glosses only deepen the reader's sense of drowning in a welter of detail, of limitless perspectives, of connections that lead everywhere and nowhere. Wheelwright was wracked by what Ashbery calls "the unsatisfiable but imperious urge to see all sides of an object."

But the effect of so many competing layers of ambiguity is not chaos, Ashbery suggests, but a "dense transparency." Thus *Mirrors of Venus*, Wheelwright's novel in sonnets that appeared in 1938, purports to describe the death of a friend and the poet's subsequent development from "Immortal Selfhood to Eternal Solidarity." Its elliptical methodology makes it difficult to follow this progress with any certainty; one is struck instead by Wheelwright's baroque fecundity of image and reference, and by his tortured syntax, which forces complex theological arguments and the noise of distant milk trains or advertisements for CARTER'S INC and CHEVROLET into uneasy juxtaposition.

If Riding's work prefigured the radical use of abstraction in the work of Ashbery and fellow New York poets such as Frank O'Hara and Kenneth Koch, Wheelwright demonstrated the poetic possibilities of jumble, distraction, free association, contradiction, multiplicity of discourse, and the use of references to one's coterie of friends. Nearly all Wheelwright's poems were dedicated to members of his Boston set, as many of O'Hara's poems were inscribed to New York poets, painters, musicians, and dancers. A number of his best poems, such as "Train Ride," are like riffs in which his thoughts and immediate circumstances are brilliantly played off against each other:

> There is no physic
> for the world's ill, nor surgery; it must
> (hot smell of tar on wet salt air)
> burn in a fever forever...

In the title poem of *Houseboat Days*, Ashbery characterizes the mind as "so hospitable, taking in everything/Like boarders": and though Wheelwright aimed, like his hero Shelley, to write poetry that would revolutionize society, his work ended up "hospitable" in just the sense Ashbery means. Particularly in late works such as *Political Self-Portrait* (1940) and the posthumously published *Dusk to Dusk*, Wheelwright's convictions become the lens through which the vagaries of his consciousness are filtered in all their baffling, lyrical, irreducible variety. Wheelwright

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was killed by a drunk driver in 1940, and Ashbery has rightly called his premature death a devastating "secret loss to American poetry."

EVEN MORE SECRET was the loss sustained six years later, when David Schubert died of tuberculosis in a hospital in Central Islip, Long Island at the age of 33. He had spent the previous years in a variety of mental health institutions, having been diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic after some particularly turbulent behavior in 1943. Although his work had been published in a number of the most prestigious magazines of the era, such as *Poetry*, *The Nation*, and *Partisan Review*, and he had been selected for the *New Directions Five Young American Poets* series in 1941, it took Schubert's widow fifteen years to find a publisher for *Initial A*, which seems to have made little impact when it finally appeared in 1961. In 1983, however, the *Quarterly Review of Literature* issued a volume called *Works and Days* that included nearly all of Schubert's surviving poetry, many of his letters, reminiscences by his wife and friends, and appreciations by a variety of critics and by poets such as Ashbery and James Wright.

Schubert's mental health appears never to have been very secure, and he had the misfortune to be writing twenty years before madness began to feature regularly on any ambitious poet's resumé. His friend Theodore Weiss described being with Schubert as "like hitching yourself to a falling meteor and volcano combined." On a number of occasions Schubert tried to destroy his own work, and, alas, he partially succeeded: we know that he burnt a quantity of poetry, and a novel of which only the first sentence survives: "Outside it was Tuesday." The poems that make up *Initial A* had to be pieced together from scraps and drafts by Judith Schubert after her husband's death.

Schubert grew up in poverty in Detroit. His father abandoned the family when Schubert was a boy, and soon afterward his mother committed suicide: it was Schubert who found her body hanging in their apartment on his return from school one afternoon. He was so precocious a student that he was offered a full scholarship to Amherst when he was sixteen. There he met and impressed the normally unimpressible Robert Frost. But Schubert's obsession with his own poetry led him to skip most of his classes; he dropped out, was reinstated after representations by his puzzled but admiring teachers, and on his return refused to mend his ways and was ultimately expelled for good.

"The typical Schubert poem," Ashbery observes, "has the appearance of something smashed, not too painstakingly put back together again, and finally contemplated with both remorse and amusement." Whereas Wheelwright never seems to question the overall significance of his bursts of enthusiasm or invective or self-doubt, however elliptically or playfully he phrases them, Schubert can often seem almost detached from the oblique dramas that his poems enact, as if they unfolded in a realm subtly but decisively removed from the urgencies of the real world. "This is the book that no one knows," he declares in "Kind Valentine," "The paper wall holds mythic oaks,/Behind the oaks a castle grows." The rhyme between "knows" and "grows" (Schubert is, among other things, a superb rhymer) seems to illustrate how in the secret space of poetry one must simply accept the elusive laws of connection on which the poem insists. Schubert's work exudes an aura of dreaminess that could not be further from the programmatic strangeness of the French Surrealists' attempts to render the workings of the id: his images slide in and out of focus, and subliminally one is made to feel sure that everything (to borrow a line from Ashbery's first volume) "has a schedule, if you can find out what it is."

Ashbery was greatly struck by the Schubert poems that he came across in magazines in the 1940s, and something of Schubert's remote but arresting tone pervades many of the poems collected in *Some Trees*. Ashbery's suicidal novice in "Illustration," of 1956, who accepts the good wishes of the crowd gathered beneath, but then leaps off her cornice and drifts "slowly downward/Out of the angels' tenderness and the minds of men," seems gentle and helpless in a particularly Schubertian way. "To others I leave the fleeting/Memory of myself," Schubert concludes in his final poem, an elegy for himself ironically entitled "No Finis."

The instability of his poems often registers as a new way of incarnating one of lyric poetry's most perennial themes, the transience of experience—or as Schubert put it himself in his introduction to his work in the *Five Young American Poets* volume, "the music of the vowel and consonant is the happy-go-lucky echo of time itself." In his best poems, such as "Kind Valentine," this "echo" registers as at once hypnotic, plangent, elusive, mysteriously textured, and very powerful:

> The candles rise in the warm night
> Back and forth, the tide is bright.
> Slowly, slowly, the waves retreat
> Under her wish and under feet.
> And over tight breath, tighter eyes,
> The mirror ebbs, it ebbs and flows.
> And the intern, the driver, speed
> To gangrene! But—who knows—suppose
> He was beside her! Please,
> star-bright,
> First I see, while in the night
> A soft-voiced, like a tear, guitar—
> It calls a palm coast from afar.
> And oh, so far the stars were there
> For him to hang upon her hair
> Like the white rose he gave,
> white hot,
> While the low sobbing band—
> it wept
> Violets and forget-me-knots.

IT IS TO be hoped that Ashbery's advocacy of Schubert, who is the most neglected and the most difficult to obtain of the writers whom he discusses in his new book, will lead to a new edition and a further revaluation of Schubert's work; and it is my even more fervent wish that better times beckon for Raymond Roussel, whose work was a great influence on a wide range of writers and artists, such as Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, Jean Cocteau, André Breton, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Michel Foucault, and Georges Perec, as well as New York writers such as Ashbery and Kenneth Koch. In 1951, Koch returned to New York from a spell in Europe with a number of fading yellow Lemerre editions of Roussel's work; and it was his reading of Roussel's extraordinary final poem, *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* (1932), that principally inspired Ashbery with the desire to set off for France himself. In 1955, he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship, and he spent most of the following decade in Paris researching a doctorate on Roussel that he never completed, and writing the poems that make up *The Tennis Court Oath* (1962), *Rivers and Mountains* (1966), and the magisterial long poem "Fragment," that is collected in *The Double Dream of Spring* (1970).

But Ashbery's research did lead him to publish several essays on Roussel that served to introduce many—including myself—to the work of this most peculiar of writers. Roussel ends "How I Published Certain of My Books," his posthumously published account of his life and his compositional methods, with the modest hope that he might, in the end, "for want of anything better, enjoy a little posthumous fame on account of my books." He has long been a canonical figure in France, but should he ever achieve even a fraction of the *gloire* he yearned for in the Anglophone world, it will be in large measure a result of Ashbery's obsession with his writings in the 1950s and 1960s.

Roussel's best known texts, his novels *Impressions d'Afrique* (*Impressions of Africa*, 1910) and *Locus Solus* (Latin for *A Solitary Place*, 1914) were written with the aid of what he calls his "very special

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method," which exploits the doubleness of language: Roussel would take a common phrase such as *Napoléon premier empereur*, and break it down into a series of homophones: *nappe* (tablecloth) *olé* (the Spanish exclamation) *ombre* (shadow) *miettes* (crumbs) *hampe* (pole) *air* (breeze) *heure* (hour). He would then have to devise an episode that would make use of all the elements that he had garnered. Or he would think of two names connected by *à*, such as *revers à marguerite* (a buttonhole with a daisy), and make use of the secondary possible meanings of each noun: *revers*, for instance, can mean defeat, and Marguerite he takes to refer to Goethe's heroine: hence we get a black chieftain in *Impressions d'Afrique* who suffers a military defeat while dressed, for reasons too complicated to explain, as Marguerite from Goethe's *Faust*.

Ashbery's interest in Roussel coincided with his conviction that to develop as a poet he would have to experiment with analogous ways of fracturing language and narrative. (Ashbery's rejection of syntax and coherence provoked just the sort of outrage that greeted Roussel's work some fifty years earlier.) But it was not, in fact, Roussel's novels as books which guaranteed him his fifteen minutes of notoriety, but the stage adaptations of them, and the performances of his two plays, *L'Étoile au front* (*The Star on the Forehead*, 1925) and *La Poussière de soleils* (*The Dust of Suns*, 1927). These events turned into pitched battles between his Surrealist supporters—André Breton, Robert Desnos, Michel Leiris, and Benjamin Péret—and the bourgeois audiences who hissed and jeered the scenarios that Roussel had hoped would delight and enchant them.

At vast expense Roussel hired the best theaters, the best actors, and the best set designers and costume designers, and had posters plastered all over Paris urging the public to come and see the earthworm that performs on the zither, the statue of a Spartan helot made of corset whalebones mounted on a trolley that runs on railway lines made of calves' lights, the cats that play prisoners' base, the carefully emaciated Alcott brothers whose bones echo songs sung by their father, the man who plays haunting Breton airs on a flute carved from his own tibia. The audiences did come, but only to mock; and on a number of occasions the theater had to be closed down in mid-performance. Despite the strangeness of his writings, Roussel never had any interest in the avant-garde; rather he hoped to be as popular as his heroes Jules Verne and Pierre Loti. The vociferous, often aggressive support of the Surrealists meant little to him, and in his last years he turned to chess and drugs in the hope of recovering the sense of aesthetic elation that he had enjoyed in his youth.

"THE WORKS," ASHBERY noted in his poem "October at the Window" in 1987,

> Of Thomas Lovell Beddoes fall open
> And are sick and alive, books of iron,
> and faintly gilded
> In the dim light of the early nineteenth
> century.

Although Ashbery's work is nearly always discussed in relation to the avant-garde and the successive waves of post-modernism, there also runs through it, like an undertow, a nostalgic relish for the gloom and clutter of the nineteenth century; this occasionally surfaces in borrowings from Pater, Tennyson, Swinburne, Cowper, or the two poets considered here, Beddoes and Clare. Both have recently received much attention—Clare because of the issues arising from Eric Robinson's disputed claim to own the copyright to his works, and Beddoes because two new selections of his poetry were published in recent years. They were roughly contemporaries, but it would be hard to pick two more antithetical figures from the period; and in their contrarily extreme ways, both largely ignored the metaphysical implications and symbolic obssessions of Romanticism, much to Ashbery's delight.

Clare's appeal to Ashbery lies in his ability to produce unselfconsciously flat transcriptions of nature in all its humdrum, awkward messiness, while Beddoes's elaborate pageants of violence present a world of wholly stylized spectacle and rhetoric that at times verges on the surreal—particularly in isolated fragments, such as the observation he planned to include somewhere in *Love's Arrow Poisoned* (1823–1825) that "Ziba/Was born in an old ruined century/Three or four doors above the one we live in," or the sort of epic-askew reference in the same set of jottings to "The swan-winged horses of the skies/With summer's music in their manes." What is absent from both Beddoes and Clare is an easily ascertainable motivation that might make sense of their approaches to writing, or their compulsion to write.

Clare literally, as he once put it, "found [his] poems in the fields / And only wrote them down" (normally using his hat as a desk). Whereas Wordsworth, say, always sought from his encounters with nature some mystical uplift or revelation—"a sense sublime/Of something far more deeply interfused" and so on—Clare was interested only in what was actually there. What never becomes clear, however, is why he thinks his readers should be interested in learning in such detail how the yellowhammer or the wagtail or the pettichap makes its nest—and yet we *are* interested, largely perhaps because Clare takes our interest so unhesitatingly for granted. No Clare landscape adds up, as that of Tintern Abbey so transcendently does, to more than the sum of its parts, and it is in this freedom from large-scale patterns of significance, Ashbery argues, that the "seeming modernity" of his poetry lies.

Beddoes's ever-ramifying *Death's Jest-Book*, and his earlier plays such as *Torrismond: An Unfinished Drama* (1824) and *The Second Brother: A Tragedy* (1824–1825), are equally without a center. But while a description by Clare of cesspools or a puddock or a morning mist is always rendered in empirically exact terms, Beddoes's entire conception of poetry seems based on the ideal of self-sustaining artifice: the more far-fetched the dramatic situation, the more resonant and convincing the rhetoric. "At the feast of the muses," observed Edmund Gosse in his preface to his edition of Beddoes's works in 1890, "he appears bearing little except one small savory dish, some cold preparation, we may say, of olives and anchovies, the strangeness of which has to make up for its lack of importance."

But oddly, as in Clare, it is the lack of importance that underwrites and licenses Beddoes's strangeness, making him seem "tough but fragile," as Ashbery argues in his essay, or "sick and alive," as his poem put it. Something of this paradox appears to lie behind his best-known individual poem, "Dream-Pedlary," in which the phantasmic and the real are so dizzyingly confused that the poem comes to seem a riddle from which there is no escape. Ashbery once described the effect of Roussel's writing as being "like a Chinese box that one turns over and over, certain that there is a concealed spring somewhere, that in a moment the lid will fly open, revealing possibly nothing more than its own emptiness, but proving that reality is only a false bottom"; and Beddoes's "Dream-Pedlary" induces precisely this kind of vertiginous bafflement. It might be said to prove yet again Ashbery's contention that the greatest art is the most reckless—and even that the very notion of a single "tradition" is a contradiction in terms. For there can be no explaining, finally, why we love the poetry that means most to us:

> If there are ghosts to raise,
> What shall I call,
> Out of hell's murky haze,
> Heaven's blue pall?
> Raise my loved long-lost boy
> To lead me to his joy.
> There are no ghosts to raise;

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Out of death lead no ways;
Vain is the call.

Know'st thou not ghosts to sue
No love thou hast.
Else lie, as I will do,
And breathe thy last.
So out of Life's fresh crown
Fall like a rose-leaf down.
Thus are the ghosts to woo;
Thus are all dreams made true,
Ever to last! ■

The Art of the Deal

By E. V. THAW

Tales from the Art Crypt: The Painters, the Museums, the Curators, the Collectors, the Auctions, the Art by Richard Feigen

(Knopf, 304 pp., $30)

Landscape With Figures: A History of Art Dealing in the United States by Malcolm Goldstein

(Oxford University Press, 352 pp., $35)

NEARLY FIFTY YEARS ago, when I asked my future father-in-law for his daughter's hand in marriage, he asked what I did for a living. His face fell when I told him that I was an art dealer. I discovered then that my profession was only one step removed from street peddler or rug salesman. In those days, a respectable career was to be made in Wall Street or in banking, or perhaps in a chic position in advertising. It was not until many years later that my colleagues in the art-dealing trade and I began to receive calls from clients or distant acquaintances trying to find art-gallery jobs for their freshly graduated daughters and sons, for whom an art-world job was the most desirable station.

How did this change come about? Economics certainly played a part. It turned out that my wife's father had been a fraternity brother of the painter Arthur Dove at Hobart College. As young men they shared an apartment together in New York City early in the last century. Dove was doing newspaper cartoons and William Eddy had started in Wall Street. I showed Mr. Eddy a Dove painting that I had for sale then (in the early 1950s) and told him that it cost $1,500. He was shocked by the figure, remarking that he could have gotten dozens of pictures from Dove, whom he kept up with for some years, but he never thought that his pictures would have any value. What would he think today when that same $1,500 canvas by Dove would bring over $1 million? Would he or anyone else still think of art dealing as pushcart peddling?

And much else has happened to affect the prestige of art dealing: books and plays about such dealers as Duveen, the rise of the auction houses, the era of "super-prices" (to use Joseph Alsop's term), and the growth of a museum culture to rival sports and theme parks as a source of public entertainment. Super-prices as a market phenomenon have created a new class of living artists who are celebrities and multi-millionaires with entourages of accountants, lawyers, publicists, agents, and the rest. (Some dealers who never became super-rich still became celebrities along with their best artists, such as Leo Castelli, who struggled to support and promote his discoveries, developing their fame in Europe in order to increase their "cachet" at home.) In the last generation we have also witnessed the creation of some incredible fortunes by art dealing. The European dealers Heinz Berggruen and Ernst Beyeler would easily qualify for the Forbes Four Hundred list if they lived in the United States, just as Norton Simon for years made the cut by virtue of his mammoth art holdings.

In today's scholarly climate, in which the material and extra-aesthetic dimensions of art commend the attention of most art historians, it is surprising that they have not yet fully discovered art markets as a subject of inquiry. To be sure, art dealing is, by its nature, somewhat secretive. And in a holdover from the years when our careers were unfashionable and socially tainted, the names of art dealers have been regularly left out of exhibition catalogues and even museum collection catalogues which attempt to provide provenances for the works they list. It was not until the late Ralph Colin, speaking on behalf of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA), wrote to J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery in Washington, threatening to advise all members never to lend to National Gallery shows, that the policy of referring to dealer loans anonymously as "Private Collection" was suspended. I am not sure what the policy is these days, but I would not be surprised by some backsliding.

Richard Feigen's book of vignettes about his career as a major art dealer is the latest entry into the sparse literature on the subject. Feigen is a good and lively writer. His opinions are always provocative and sometimes profound; and the tales of his adventures and misadventures have much to teach about the character of the art market in our day. Feigen's chapters present discrete and interesting episodes of his business life and of his parallel career as a notable collector. A certain number of the stories that he tells seem designed to show how well-connected he has been (and still is) with the swells of the art world. He was at many of the "right" dinner parties, he happened to overhear or run into many fortuitous conversations or encounters, and he efficiently followed up on those lucky breaks.

Not always successfully, though; his reminiscences about the deals that did not go his way taste sometimes of sour grapes. He nearly got hold of the Gertrude Stein pictures after Alice Toklas's death; he nearly started with Michael Milken an investment fund for great Old Master paintings; he nearly got Sydney Freedberg, the art historian of Mannerist and Baroque, appointed consultant to the Art Institute of Chicago. There are many more "almosts" along with many real achievements, especially his "coups" in spotting unrecognized masterworks in out-of-the-way places as well as in the public auction room.

What an eye Feigen has, and what a career! He started as an incredibly young collector, specializing in the German Expressionists. Max Beckman has been a lifelong favorite from those days. He bought a seat on the New York Stock Exchange in his twenties, one of the youngest people ever to do so. Indeed, his beginnings were

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in the financial world, so that he has always been able to hold his own with tycoons and trustees. Entering the ranks of New York art dealers, he also kept an active gallery in his home city Chicago. Early on, he met many of the Surrealist artists and their entourages. The pioneering dealer-writer Julian Levy, whose gallery and personal collection were seminal forces in the appreciation of surrealism in America, became a friend and a mentor to the young dealer. (Joseph Cornell's magical boxes so appealed to Feigen, who also shared in control of Cornell's estate, that he accumulated twenty-one of them in a special case built in his house, though he nearly swapped all of them with the Metropolitan Museum for a major Beckman, pulling back after the Met's de-accessioning scandals under Thomas Hoving broke into the news.)

At some point, we are not told when or how, Feigen turned seriously to Old Masters. He is living proof that the experience of dealing can be a much more intense training in connoisseurship than academic courses that depend on photographs or slides and provide little exposure to the real thing. Recognizing historical gaps in the history of taste and collecting in America, Feigen specialized in Baroque and Mannerist painters whose names were not yet household words but whose important role in the history of art was recognized. He cultivated firm friendships with notable scholars in his field, such as Denis Mahon, Egbert Havercamp-Begeman, and the late Sydney Freedberg, to whom this book is dedicated.

Feigen eloquently discusses the current conflict in the museum world between old-fashioned connoisseurship and the careful, loving preservation of art objects, and today's notion that the museum should "become an entertainment palace and elementary art school." The insistence by the new type of trustee upon the "bottom line," and the concomitant notion that museums should provide popular entertainment for maximum crowds, spawned the blockbuster exhibition, which is usually just the noisy and pandering presentation of yet another aspect of impressionism, or else lots of gold objects from Mexico, Russia, Egypt, or wherever they were dug up.

By far the most thoughtful section of Feigen's book is the long chapter that he calls "The War of the Museums." He laments the rise of the corporate museum, run by directors chosen for fund-raising and administrative skill rather than connoisseurship or even love of art. He describes the transition from snobbish old-money trustees to the newer self-made CEO types, who now may even be Jewish, and who want their museums run like businesses. At the same time, extremely sensitive to both anti-Semitism and Jewish social climbing, Feigen laments that that transition was so slow in coming; and in this same contradictory way of thinking, he scolds the late Paul Mellon for not expanding the National Gallery's small board with the new type of trustee.

MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN HAS written a very different kind of book about the art market. He has produced a valuable book, a strictly historical and empirical account of the art trade in America from its beginnings in the early-nineteenth century, from which he raises such forgotten figures as Pierre Flandin, Samuel Doggett, and Michael Paff. Some of the information that he provides is delightful: the German emigré, Paff, for example, arriving on the same boat as John Jacob Astor. Paff opened a music shop with instruments, sheet music, and music boxes, and so did Astor in his beginnings; but in 1802 Paff bought Astor out and by 1811 left his brother John with the music business and opened what the New York Register and City Directory called a "picture gallery." It is with such exhaustive research and such a keen eye for the telling detail, that Goldstein carries his reader through the rest of the nineteenth century, through the Hudson River School painters, the post-Civil War landscapists, and the taste for the decent Barbizon artists from France along with acres of canvas of Breton girls at prayer, farmyards with geese and cattle, and monumental nude ladies representing motherhood, a river goddess, or any nymph from antiquity.

Goldstein makes no judgements, and provides no theories, economic or otherwise; he just unwinds his list of unfamiliar and occasionally familiar names of the dealers and their brief histories. He resurrects some figures about whom it is welcome to read after decades of neglect, such as Charles Daniel, whose gallery was a pioneering institution in the early days of modernist art in America. But Daniel was a weak businessman, and he was done in by the Depression. When I met him in the early 1950s he was a proud but sad derelict, carrying small pictures from gallery to gallery, hoping for a sale. Goldstein confirms that he died in poverty.

The bulk of Goldstein's book is concerned with the post-World War II era. Here more of the names will be familiar to anyone with any experience of art-talk. And it is here, I fear, that this otherwise useful account goes a bit off the rails. There is too little discrimination between major and minor figures. Pierre Matisse surely deserves more than a few paragraphs. The same slight is inflicted on Curt Valentin, whose gallery was a crucial venue for Picasso, Gris, Klee, Henry Moore and Lehmbruck, until his early death in 1954. Feigen is dispatched in a single sentence near the end of the book; William Acquavella is mentioned once, in passing; but Leo Castelli is everywhere, as is Peggy Guggenheim, Sydney Janis, Sam Kootz, and Betty Parsons. What really interests Goldstein, in other words, is the post-war Abstract Expressionists and their dealers, and the so-called Pop artists who followed. But these stories have been told and retold, and Goldstein provides little new information.

Another subject that barely appears in Goldstein's book is the phenomenon of the dealer as collector. Indeed, little has been published about the great collector-dealers: Beyeler, Berggruen, Steiglitz, Acquavella, Raeber, Feilchenfeldt, Perls, Thanhauser, Janis. The subject of the so-called "private dealer" as opposed to the gallery owner needs to be examined, along with the current vogue for "art advisers" or private curators for today's super-rich, who have no time to look at art for themselves. In this connection, I note that Rudolph Heinemann, one of the greatest art dealers of the past century and the *éminence grise* of the Old Master trade, is very nearly unmentioned in Goldstein's account, although he created the original Thyssen collection and was a partner in nearly every first rate Old Master painting that was sold in America in the forty years before his death in 1978. Another secretive American source of the greatest Old Masters is Stanley Moss, who is not given even a footnote in this history, though he has handled and owned (among much else) that part of the great Contini-Bonacossi collection from Florence which Italy allowed to be exported. (The famous Zurbaran "Still-life with Lemons" in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena is just one of the many treasures that came to America via Moss.)

One cannot cover all the bases and list all the names in such a record, as Goldstein himself concedes; but still one must be able to balance the more important against the less important. Articles and archives are significant historical sources, obviously, but they must be supplemented by an intimate knowledge of the art market, the museums, and the collectors. And so a more resonant and sophisticated history of art dealing in America—on the model of Francis Haskell's *Patrons and Painters in the Eighteenth Century*—remains to be written. Until it comes along, however, Goldstein's diligent book and Feigen's vivid book will both serve very nicely. After all, the annals of taste are an essential chapter in the annals of civilization. ■

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

All Too Human

IN THEORY, THE principle animating the Bush campaign in Florida was that votes should be counted by objective machines—no interference from biased and fallible human beings. But, in practice, the Bushies' preference was not for technology over humans but for *their* humans over anyone else's. For instance, in Seminole and Martin Counties, where Republican election officials allowed Republican operatives to doctor absentee-ballot applications, while Democrats were not granted the same right. And in Tallahassee, where, months before the election, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris hired a highly suspect, GOP-connected database company to purge the state's voter rolls of thousands of mostly minority citizens, many of whom it falsely categorized as felons. And in Austin, where Jeb Bush worked the phones on election night in a last-ditch effort to make sure Florida went his brother's way. And in Nassau County, where Republican election officials rejected the results of the machine recount, thereby adding 51 votes to Bush's margin. Did James Baker object to this rank subjectivity? Did Harris cry out against this human interference? No: Harris certified the new result, and Baker quietly played along.

BUT DON'T DESPAIR. THE BUSH CAMpaign rediscovered its devotion to machines in time to savage the hand counts in Democratic Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties—hand counts that would almost certainly have handed Al Gore the presidency. Baker held press conference after press conference to explain the virtue of voting machines. Yet if Florida has taught us anything, it is just how unreliable those machines are. Especially the machines used in Democratic areas—which represented the real "equal protection" question our esteemed Supreme Court refused to touch. Two counts of one precinct's votes by the same antiquated machine often produce two different results. Hand counts conducted by people of honesty and goodwill—character traits with which the Bushies, needless to say, are not overly acquainted—are much more reliable.

NOBODY HAS QUITE ACCUSED BAKER, Jeb Bush, or Harris of the sin of simony in their efforts to get the Miami-Dade election supervisors to void the votes of their own constituents. But what else could the Florida Supreme Court have been thinking when it stipulated that Miami-Dade's ballots be scrutinized not by its usual canvassers but by court officials? In any case, given the magnitude of the theft that has occurred, the whole story will come out, sooner rather than later. This is a grand crime against democracy, and it was committed by a candidate whose overriding campaign claim was that he could be trusted. Once the story of Florida 2000 is known in full, George W. Bush may well wish he had become baseball commissioner rather than president.

BUT NOT YET. FOR NOW, BUSH REmains "excited ... excited about the potential" of being president. He expressed surprise at receiving congratulations from so many heads of state, as if maybe he didn't realize quite how many there were. But, his ignorance notwithstanding, Bush is already learning to be imperious. When asked at a photo-op about House Speaker Dennis Hastert's opposition to his huge and hugely irresponsible $1.3 trillion, across-the-board tax cut, the president-elect responded: "I have made it clear to the speaker once before that, you know, I campaigned on a package that I thought was fair and fiscally sound and responsible." And, later that day, Hastert changed his tune and fell obligingly into line.

AL GORE'S ELEGANT AND ELOQUENT short talk congratulating Bush on his election was actually painful for me to hear. In Texas, Bush is widely known as "the great executioner." His death chamber is, as *The New York Times* pointed out this week, the busiest in the nation. But now he has another mantle: He is the great usurper. It's true that he's not the first dynastic president—John Quincy Adams also inherited from his father a first name, a last name, and a spot in the Oval Office. But Adams was a truly great man: intellectually imaginative, philosophically deep, politically brave. By contrast, George W. is our first true dauphin: truly unserious, remarkably undistinguished, designated only because he is the eldest son of the last chief executive to produce a line of hopefuls and because his father's friends paved his path to the White House with campaign finance gold.

FOR ONCE, EVEN THE TALKING HEADS seemed to appreciate Gore's speech, its grace and its deep feeling for democratic continuity. Even Cokie Roberts and Sam Donaldson appreciated it, and Bill Schneider and Tim Russert, too. To be sure, they'd been waiting for Gore to give up ever since they stayed up late on November 7 misinforming the nation about the results of the election. And, like others in the dreary CNN/Fox/CNBC commentariat, they had wished him ill long before that. But, even in their satisfaction at Gore's defeat, they couldn't suppress their long-resisted admiration for the originality and intellectual coherence of his views. They will have reason to recall these rare and valuable traits every time they hear our next president utter the commonplace phrases he mistakes for ideas.

IN HIS SPEECH TO THE NATION, GORE cited the phrase inscribed above the portals of the Harvard Law School library: NON SUB HOMINE SED SUB DEO ET LEGE, "Not under man but under God and law." In the very same place, some students at the law school have now unfurled a banner expressing their fury at the Court they were taught to revere. Their banner says NOT UNDER GOD OR LAW BUT UNDER REHNQUIST. As it happens, Chief Justice William Rehnquist's career of limiting citizens' access to the voting booth goes back many years. An article by Dennis Roddy with the headline "JUST OUR BILL," which appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on December 2 (and is accessible on the Web at *www.post-gazette.com*), recounts how in the election of 1964 the then-youngish Republican lawyer William Rehnquist intimidated blacks and immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona, from exercising suffrage. Then he did it as the thuggish boss of an insidious project called "Operation Eagle Eye." Now he does it in a long black robe from behind the great bench.

NEITHER MY SON JESSE NOR I PUT much stock in the prophecies of Nostradamus. Especially when Nostradamus's "prophecies" come from the Web, which has a tendency to manufacture quotes for occasions like these. But I'll share the "quotation" from the medieval prognosticator that Jesse e-mailed me anyway, because, whoever penned them, the words couldn't be more true, or more sad:

> Come the millennium, month twelve,
> In the home of greatest power,
> The village idiot will come forth
> To be acclaimed the leader.

MARTIN PERETZ

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THEN & *NOW*

FOR WHOM DOES THE BELL TOLL?

Year 1624 - John Donne states in "Meditation 17" how we are all part of mankind and that if one of mankind is injured, all of mankind is injured. Donne writes:

> "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. ***Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Year 2001 - General Colin Powell is nominated to be Secretary of State. General Powell by his prior words and deeds has stated "genocide" alone is not sufficient to justify military intervention.

Example. Presidents George H. Bush and Bill Clinton followed General Powell's policy and refused to intervene in Bosnia: Results, 200,000 murdered, 25,000 raped, 1 million ethnically cleansed. On July 11, 1995 in Srebrenica, Bosnia, a U.N. Safe Haven, the following occurred as stated by *Judge Riad of the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague:*

"The evidence ... described scenes of unimaginable savagery, thousands of men executed and buried in mass graves, hundreds of men buried alive, men and women mutilated and slaughtered, children killed before their mothers eyes, a grandfather forced to eat the liver of his grandson. These are truly scenes from Hell, written on the darkest page of human history"

There is a fundamental difference between the national interests of a totalitarian government versus a democracy. In a totalitarian government, foreign policy is judged solely on the interests of the State, regardless of the moral principles of its people. In a democracy, foreign policy serves the interest of its citizens as well as the State. The national interest of a democracy therefore must incorporate the moral principles of its citizens.

Our society has stated that "*genocide*" is against our *moral principles* and is a crime. See U. N. GAOR Resolution 260A (III), adopted by U.S. Senate Feb. 23, 1989, and 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1091, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. ***John McCain*** in referring to Rwanda in the South Carolina primary, acknowledged this moral duty when he said: ***"there were times when a violation of moral principles justified the commitment of troops."***

George W. Bush, who has stated he would not have authorized 5,000 troops to intervene in Rwanda to save 800,000 men, women, and children who were slaughtered in 47 days, will be looking to General Powell to carry out *our country's* foreign policy.

History will record that morality, justice, and intervention in opposition to *genocide* were in our national interest and that when General Powell and those who agreed with him heard the bell toll after Bosnia and Rwanda, it tolled for them.

We now have a President and Secretary of State of *our Country* who don't know the difference between the National Interests of a Totalitarian Government and a Democracy.

Will the bell again toll for our Country?

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